DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 323 820 FL 800 244

AUTHOR	Kogan, Deborah; And Others
TITLE	Evaluation of Orr's Discretionary Grant Support for Enhanced Skills Training and Multiple Wage Earners. Final Report.
INSTITUTION	American Institutes for Research, Washington, D.C.; Berkeley Planning Associates, Calif.; Lewin and Associates, Inc., Washington, D.C.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Refugee Resettlement (DHHS), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	Jul 86
CONTRACT	600-84-0231
NOTE	194p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Berkeley Planning Associates, 440 Grant Ave., Suite 500, Oakland, CA 94610.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Basic Education; Employed Parents; Employment Opportunities; *Employment Potential; Employment Qualifications; Federal Programs; Grants; *Job Skills; *Labor Force Development; *Literacy Education; Program Evaluation; *Refugees; Skill Development
IDENTIFIERS	*Enhanced Skills Training Program; *Multiple Wage Earner Program

ABSTRACT

An evaluation of the Multiple Wage Earner (MWE) discretionary grant program and Enhanced Skills Training (EST) program developed by the Department of Health and Human Services is reported. The EST program was intended to reach hard-to-employ refugees through improvement of the quality of jobs available to refugees experiencing difficulties becoming self-sufficient, and the MWE program was designed to encourage all potential wage earners within a household to enter the labor market. The study's major conclusions include the following: (1) many of the discretionary projects failed to recruit and/or enroll appropriate clients, as a result of a variety of factors; (2) contrary to requirements, the primary EST service strategy was direct placement rather than placement after training, and the primary MWE strategy was short-term classroom skills training with subsequent entry-level job placement, instead of enriched support services and immediate job placement; (3) in most cases, EST projects did not succeed in placing participants in well paid jobs; and (4) MWE programs were successful in placing underserved individuals in entry-level jobs. Project profiles are appended. (MSE) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)

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EVALUATION OF ORR'S DISCRETIONARY GRANT SUPPORT FOR ENHANCED SKILLS TRAINING AND MULTIPLE WAGE EARNERS

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FINAL REPORT

July 1986

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This report was prepared for the Office of Refugee Resettlement, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, in response to Task Order Number Three under general contract number 600-84-0231, entitled Assessment of Refugee Program Alternatives. Principal authors of the report are Deborah Kogan and Marlene Strong Franks of Berkeley Planning Associates, Susan Forbes and Margaret Chamberlain of Refugee Policy Group, and Peggie Campeau of American Institutes for Research. The project team for this work also included Dennis Gallagher of Refugee Policy Group, Steven Jung of American Institutes for Research, and Timothy Eckels of Lewin and Associates.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to express our appreciation to all those who contributed to these findings by responding to our requests for qualitative and quantitative data on these discretionary grant projects during telephone queries and field interviews. Our thanks, especially, to the state refugee program staff and project staff who were gracious and open hosts during our field site visits and who enabled us to keep up with new developments that occurred after we returned home. We thank them for sharing their experiences and insights about how to design and implement effective strategies to assist refugees who are experiencing difficulty in finding employment in jobs that offer a stable future for them and their families. We also thank them for sharing their experiences about pitfalls to avoid in future efforts.

We would also like to thank ORR officials at both the national and regional levels who contributed their insights. Our special appreciation goes to Ellen McGovern, ORR Task Order Officer, and Allan Gall, ORR Project Officer, for their assistance and careful guidance throughout this project.

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GLOSSARY

Because the refugee field and the welfare and employment and training fields tend to use acronyms, we have included this glossary for the uninitiated.

MWE = Multiple Wage Earner

EST = Enhanced Skills Training

OJT = On-the-Job Training

ESL = English as a Second Language

VELT = Vocational English Language Training (also referred to as VESL)

AFDC = Aid to Families with Dependent Children

AFDC-UP or AFDC-U = Aid to Familes with Dependent Children - Unemployed Parent (program for two-parent households where the primary wage earner is unemployed)

RCA = Refugee Cash Assistance

GR or GA = General Relief or General Assistance

JTPA = Job Training Partnership Act (successor to CETA)

MAA = Mutual Assistance Association

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Multiple Wage Earner and Enhanced Skills Training projects assessed in this evaluation were part of a federal effort to learn from and develop innovative programs in response to social science research on the experience of refugees after arrival in the United States. This research -- which has focused primarily on the experience of refugee arrivals from Southeast Asia in the late 1970's and early 1980's -- revealed an important fact about the process by which refugees are becoming self-sufficient: that having several wage earners substantially increases the probability that a refugee household will be able to earn its way out of poverty since primary wage earners do not appear to be advancing to higher paying jobs over time. In response to this finding and to concern that some refugee households were at risk of long-term welfare dependency, ORR developed the Enhanced Skills Training (EST) discretionary grant program to reach hard-to-employ individuals and the Multiple Wage Earner (MWE) discretionary grant program to encourage all potential wage earners to enter the labor market.

The EST projects were intended to develop service strategies to improve the quality of jobs available to refugees experiencing substantial difficulties becoming self-sufficient because of large family size, limited English language skills, limited work experience, lack of specific job skills, or other handicapping conditions. The EST projects were required to:

- design skills training programs to address specific skills deficits; and
- provide placement and follow-up services to enable hard-to-place clients to locate stable employment.

Appropriate EST clients were intended to be refugees with identifiable barriers to employment, and/or individuals with a personal history of difficulty in entering or retaining employment, or under-employed individuals whose earnings were not sufficient to enable their households to become financially self-sufficient.

The Multiple Wage Earner (MWE) projects were intended to identify household members with a potential for employment who were not previously reached by refugee employment services (e.g., women, older individuals, and youth), to design effective service packages to overcome employment barriers for these underserved groups, and thereby to increase the number of wage earners in participating households. The MWE projects were required to:

- identify and recruit secondary wage earners in large families where employment of additional household members would lift the household out of poverty or off the welfare rolls; and
- design a service package that included comprehensive short-term employment and supportive services to address the needs of previously underserved individuals.

Appropriate MWE clients were intended to be individuals in households with more than one potential wage earner who had not previously entered the labor market.

The purpose of this evaluation has been to describe the EST and MWE projects implemented with the demonstration funding, and to assess the extent to which the federal objectives were furthered. The following sections on Findings and Lessons to be Learned summarize the major conclusions of the study.

FINDINGS

Client Targeting

Many of the discretionary projects failed to recruit and/or enroll appropriate clients, as a result of a variety of factors, including:

- an absence of procedures for individualized screening and service planning;
- eligibility criteria that were defined either too broadly or too narrowly;
- a lack of detailed familiarity with the service needs of the target population; and

- an absence of referral relationships with other service providers.

The absence of individualized screening, assessment, and service planning procedures at both the EST and MWE projects resulted from several circumstances. First, there was an absence of assessment instruments appropriate to the skills levels and previous experiences of the participants served. Second, where assessment instruments had been developed as part of mainstream employment and training programs, they were not generally available in a form that was sensitive to the cultural background and language skills of the MWE and EST participants.

Partially as a result of the absence of assessment and screening procedures, both the EST and MWE projects established categorical eligibility criteria such as age, cash assistance status, or position in the household, rather than targeting clients who were demonstrably in need of the special services offered. At many EST projects, eligibility criteria were defined so broadly that they included virtually any refugee who inquired about services (e.g., any unemployed or underemployed refugee). At the other extreme, the MWE projects sometimes defined eligibility criteria so narrowly that unemployed primary wage earners were excluded from services, even though their employment was critical to household self-sufficiency. Thus, both kinds of projects seemed to develop eligibility criteria that hindered achievement of project objectives.

Although service providers were usually experienced in serving the refugee population in their local communities, they were not always correct in predicting what services would be in demand within the local refugee community. For example, in some MWE projects, providers went out of their way to offer an enriched package of support services (including transportation assistance and access to child care); they found that only a relatively small proportion of participants chose to utilize these services. In some EST projects, providers offered training programs, only to find that training was not an attractive service option to the enrolled participants.

EST projects usually enrolled a very diverse group of individuals, including both new arrivals and refugees who had already been in the U.S. for an extended period (i.e., over 36 months). While there was nothing improper in this choice, it complicated the design of appropriate and effective services. The result for most projects was that some recent arrivals did not have the necessary prerequisite skills to succeed in the available training, while some refugees who had been in the U.S. for a longer period probably did not need training and placement assistance to obtain the jobs in which projects placed them.

One reason why projects were not able to recruit and enroll clients that would allow them to meet the ORR objectives of targeting disadvantaged clients and helping them obtain jobs at wages high enough to achieve self-sufficiency, was the lack of integration of both the EST and MWE projects into a coordinated local refugee referral and service system. Most EST projects were operated by agencies that already were under contract to provide ORR-funded core employment services. Perhaps because these organizations were accustomed to enrolling all refugees who applied for services under these contracts, they continued to utilize an "open door" approach in enrolling refugees in the EST projects. Thus, the EST funds were treated as additional money to offer the same kinds of services previously available rather than funds for skills training aimed at a specific pool of disadvantaged clients.

MWE projects generally had a different organizational situation but with the same result -- they were most often operated by organizations that were not the core refugee employment service contractor in their locality. In the absence of referral linkages to and from the core provider, the MWE projects tended to do their own outreach and recruitment and thus could not consider the needs of the entire household. Initially, the MWE projects tended to serve women and/or youth who met a strict definition of "secondary wage earners," without determining whether they were from large households or whether another agency was already providing services to the primary wage earner. Subsequently, a number of projects expanded their target population to include all potential "multiple wage earners," including unemployed male heads of households. Several projects served all individuals who requested services, even if they were single males.

The factors cited above, combined with a monitoring system that emphasized numerical placement goals, meant that several MWE projects had a clientele that was skewed toward single males and smaller families, who were clearly inappropriate for MWE projects. The EST projects usually could not demonstrate that their clients were those who needed an enhanced training program. Thus, the targeting practices (or lack thereof) led to a situation where most of the discretionary projects could not illustrate the ORR objectives.

Service Strategy

The EST projects were to design service strategies that would provide vocational training to refugees who were otherwise unable to move off cash assistance. Vocational training could take the form of on-the-job training (OJT), customized training, or classroom training in combination with OJT, simulated work experience, or actual unpaid work experience. Contrary to ORR's requirements, the primary service strategy implemented by the EST projects was direct placement, rather than placement after skills training. When on-the-job training (OJT) contracts were utilized, they were viewed primarily as a way to offer employers a financial incentive to hire refugees, rather than as a way to impart skills to the trainees. English language training was not a required element in the EST program design and was not emphasized by most projects.

The MWE projects were to design service strategies that would provide intensive supportive services to facilitate placement of clients who had not been previously offered employment services. Contrary to ORR's requirements, the primary service strategy implemented by the MWE projects was short-term classroom skills training, followed by job placement in entry-level jobs, rather than the provision of enriched supportive services and immediate job placement.

Since many of the EST projects did not implement skills training programs, their experiences cannot reveal much about the efficacy of training in assisting refugees to obtain jobs that would allow them to leave cash assistance. On the other hand, MWE project experience showed that short-term training can be effectively used to prepare individuals with limited English and limited labor market experience to fill entry-level jobs with employers in selected industries.

Outcomes

Many of the EST projects were located in states with medium to high AFDC payment levels. In such a situation, or for refugee households with large families in any state, a minimum wage job does not usually provide the means to leave welfare dependency. Yet, in most cases, EST projects did not succeed in placing participants in jobs that offered high wages, fringe benefits, stable employment, or opportunities for advancement. Only a small proportion of all job placements made were in jobs paying over $3.65 per hour. Factors contributing to these troubling outcomes included:

- an emphasis on numerical placement goals rather than type of job;
- reluctance by some projects to utilize skills training if entry-level jobs were immediately available through direct placement;
- a reluctance by refugees in some sites to spend time in training if entry-level jobs were available without training;
- the general inexperience of the EST projects in developing and operating skills training programs;
- a general inattention to incorporating English language skills training into an integrated EST curriculum;
- a lack of sufficiently detailed labor market information to accurately target occupations with local growth potential;
- the absence of labor market opportunities in several sites experiencing high unemployment and a declining manufacturing base; and

- in some projects, participants' lack of the prerequisite basic skills to successfully complete the skills training curriculum.

MWE projects experienced success in placing underserved individuals in entry-level (minimum wage) jobs. However, because the projects did not usually target or track an entire household, it is impossible to document MWE project success (in terms of increasing total household earnings to achieve self-sufficiency). The MWE projects showed that classroom training offering a simulated work environment was an effective strategy for placing refugees with little work experience in entry-level jobs. Some of the factors that appeared to contribute to MWE projects' employment successes included:

- targeting specific industries and occupations of interest to refugees;
- designing short-term training that was based on a detailed understanding of the performance expectations of specific employers; and
- building vocationally-oriented English language training into the skills training curriculum to impart vocabulary and communication skills essential for job success.

MWE projects also pursued opportunities for women to earn money for work performed in the home, through piecework for an employer or self-employment in crafts, sewing, or child care. While this strategy seldom led to self-sufficiency, it was usually viewed as a valuable first step for homebound women who were reluctant to work outside the home because of child care responsibilities or other reasons.

Conclusion

The majority of the EST projects did not meet the ORR requirement to offer skills training programs to disadvantaged groups. MWE projects offered innovative service packages, but they did not document the effect of their programs on households' self-sufficiency. Thus, the discretionary projects did not provide a full test of the effectiveness of the MWE and EST strategies. The federal objectives underlying these programs still have validity, however. Simply stated, they are:

(1) to address specific skills deficits of refugees who remain on cash assistance by providing training, placement, and follow-up services that are geared to local labor market opportunities; and

(2) to coordinate employment services to meet the needs of all employable members of refugee households.

For the reasons given below, the EST and MWE objectives would be more effectively accomplished if incorporated into the ongoing refugee social service system, rather than being implemented through separate projects with distinct funding. Because they were separately funded and staffed, the EST and MWE projects had several problems, most of which could be eliminated by incorporating the objectives of offering skills training to those who need it and addressing the needs of multiple wage earners in a single household into ongoing programs. The primary problems experienced by the projects were:

(1) Separate projects had difficulty becoming part of a comprehensive case management and/or screening and referral system. This meant that:
   - projects attempted to provide all services rather than tapping into what was already available; and
   - projects were not responsible for achieving or measuring household self-sufficiency, but rather for the placement of the individual client.

(2) Left on their own to do outreach and recruitment, the separate projects experienced one of three dilemmas:
   - some EST projects felt unable to turn away clients, even if training was inappropriate;
   - some EST projects could not attract sufficient numbers of clients, because they were in competition with other refugee employment service providers; and

- the populations targeted by both MWE and EST projects were too narrow to consider the needs of whole households.

(3) If funded to carry out a specific service strategy, separate projects (especially EST projects) could not offer a range of options, or modify services as needed. Modifications may be needed because:

- the targeted clients may not need the offered services (e.g., older refugees needed better marketing, not training);
- the enrolled clients may not want the offered service (e.g., refugees in low-benefit states wanted placement in jobs because they could not afford to participate in training programs);
- the economy may change between the plan and the implementation (e.g., the demand for machinists or electronics assemblers may diminish).

In any of the above circumstances, a separate project will be under pressure to follow the plan laid out in its application, even if the application inaccurately projected client needs, thus offering inappropriate services or serving inappropriate clients.

Incorporating EST and MWE objectives into ongoing service programs would provide the following benefits:

- it would encourage a household rather than an individual client perspective in developing plans for self-sufficiency;
- it would allow employment projects greater flexibility to adapt employment and training services by shifting program resources toward or away from skills training in response to changing labor market circumstances and/or varying client needs; and
- it would ensure that individual refugees are referred to the most effective and appropriate package of available services.

LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

Clarifying Objectives and Developing Accountability Mechanisms

Lesson #1

When implementing demonstration projects, all participating organizations need to understand what innovative approaches the demonstration project is intended to test and what specific objectives the project is designed to achieve, and should have committed themselves to this purpose. This could be achieved through regional meetings of demonstration project operators, or earlier monitoring by federal staff who examine program strategies to see if they meet demonstration objectives. Otherwise, the special projects will be viewed as an expansion of resources to accomplish local goals or to do more of what is already being done.

Lesson #2

Placement rates are not, by themselves, a meaningful measure of program success; therefore, it is necessary to impose reporting requirements for other kinds of outcome measures. To assess the impact of training, projects should be required to document required job skills, skills deficits prior to training and the role of training in providing needed job skills. Information about prior and subsequent earnings levels and job retention is also critical. To assess the impact of a multiple wage earner approach, projects should be required to document the relationship between job placement and subsequent increases in total household income. Both kinds of projects should be required to document that families were lifted out of poverty and/or off the welfare rolls.

Building EST and MWE Objectives into the Existing Refugee Service System

Lesson #3

The objectives of (1) providing skills training (whether "enhanced" or designed to help clients get entry-level jobs) when necessary and appropriate, and (2) encouraging the employment of multiple wage earners, particularly in large households, should be built into the ongoing refugee resettlement system, rather than attempting to implement separate discretionary projects to accomplish these objectives. Service providers should be given an incentive to work with large families or clients with multiple barriers by getting credit for the increase in household earnings in addition to individual placement counts.

Lesson #4

Service providers should be required to develop a plan or strategy to make a whole household self-sufficient using a combination of skills training, direct job placement assistance, and multiple wage earner services that is appropriate to that household's needs, skills, and preferences, and local labor market conditions. Large households may require the wages of multiple wage earners in order to escape poverty, whereas smaller households may benefit from the higher wages that the primary wage earner might earn after completing a skills training program.

Including Skills Training in Service Options

Lesson #5

Skills training is not necessarily the appropriate solution for all refugees with significant employment disadvantages, or in all labor markets. Skills training designed to enable refugees to get jobs at wages sufficient to remove households from public assistance usually requires that trainees have some basic work and English or math skills. Thus, refugees most able to complete skills training programs may not be the highest priority for service using refugee program dollars, since they will usually not be looking for a first job. When the labor market is strong only in the entry-level service area, direct placement will usually be preferable to any intensive training program.

Lesson #6

When considering the possibility of providing skills training to refugees, using refugee program dollars, service providers should first think carefully about:

- the characteristics of the trainees for whom the skills training is intended (e.g., homebound women, older workers, youth, refugees who want job upgrades in a specific industry);

- the goal of the training;
- whether the training goals are feasible in the local labor market; and
- whether training is necessary to achieve those goals in the local labor market.

Plans for training should be implemented if and only if there is strong evidence that the lack of skills training is a barrier to employment, and that the planned training will enable refugees to obtain employment in the intended occupation(s).

Implementing Multiple Wage Earner Objectives

Lesson #7

In furthering multiple wage earner objectives, states should consider involving MAAs in the provision of outreach and supportive counseling to encourage work motivation and to resolve cultural and familial tensions about the issue of wives working outside the home.

Lesson #8

States and projects may want to consider utilizing group training (i.e., classroom) and group placement (i.e., more than one refugee at a job site) to serve clients with little paid work experience (e.g., older refugees or women). The MWE project experience showed that group training was one effective way to provide mutual support to participants who were fearful of entering the labor market. Both EST and MWE projects found that clients were more willing to take jobs at work sites where they would not be the only refugee present.

I. INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW OF THE GRANT PROGRAMS

In March 1984, the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) announced the availability of two types of grants to provide skills training and other employment-related services to members of large refugee households and other refugee households experiencing difficulty achieving financial self-sufficiency. Both the new federal program initiatives were designed in response to recently completed ORR-funded research which had revealed that some refugees would remain on public assistance in the absence of extensive investments in training and other employment services, and that the earnings of a single employed household member were often insufficient to enable a large household unit to become financially independent.[1] For both types of grants, states were invited to submit applications for projects of twelve to eighteen months duration.

The first set of grants, called Enhanced Skills Training grants, was designed to offer integrated skills training, placement, and post-placement follow-up services to specific subgroups of refugees who would otherwise have difficulty attaining self-sufficiency. These groups included those who were unemployed, were receiving cash assistance, or were at risk of having to resort to interstate secondary migration in order to secure cash assistance benefits, and those who had histories of extended workforce entry or advancement difficulties due to job skills and English language skills deficiencies. The grant announcement encouraged states: (1) to create service linkages to take advantage of existing training resources in the community; (2) to promote private industry involvement; (3) to focus on locating jobs in new and emerging industries and in types of jobs in which refugees were interested; and (4) to focus on locating jobs where the compensation rate would be sufficient to reduce substantially a household's dependence on cash assistance. Many different types of training could be provided using the enhanced skills training grants, including on-the-job training (OJT); customized training; or classroom training in combination with

OJT, customized training, or work experience. In addition, states could develop projects to support and encourage self-employment efforts by refugees. States were encouraged (by means of bonus points in the proposal review procedure) to target enhanced skills training services to refugees with large families, individuals with physical, emotional, or psychological impairments, older refugees (over 45 years of age), those with severely limited English language competency, or those with no work history in the U.S.

The second set of grants, called Multiple Wage Earner grants, was designed to target services to marginally self-sufficient households where the employment of an additional household member offered the potential for increasing the total household earnings. The grant announcement for the multiple wage earner grants emphasized increasing the access to employment services by underserved individuals who are members of large family households but who are not defined as "heads of households." These secondary wage earners, including hard-to-place men as well as women and youth, were hypothesized to have been underserved in the past because of an emphasis on serving heads of households, or because of a lack of outreach to these groups, complicated by a lack of necessary supportive services, such as day care and transportation assistance.

Consequently, the multiple wage earner grantees were encouraged to offer a broader range of services, including outreach, job-related vocational ESL, short-term skills training, and necessary supportive services (such as day care, social adjustment services, transportation, and cultural orientation). Because the ORR planned to award only a small number of grants for multiple wage earners, there was an increased emphasis in the grant announcement for the multiple wage earner projects on the grantee's responsibility to document the effects of these projects and to develop materials to disseminate the methods used and results obtained.

This report assesses the experience of the two initiatives: the Enhanced Skills Training grants and the Multiple Wage Earner grants. As a backdrop to the assessment, the remainder of this chapter provides the following:

- a description of the federal objectives for the Enhanced Skills Training grants;
- a description of the federal objectives for the Multiple Wage Earner grants;
- a description of the implementation of the Multiple Wage Earner and Enhanced Skills Training grants;
- a summary of key evaluation questions; and
- an overview of the study methodology.

FEDERAL OBJECTIVES FOR THE ENHANCED SKILLS TRAINING GRANTS

A careful reading of the federal announcement of funding availability for "Enhanced Skill Training/Placement/Follow-up Assistance Projects for Employment and Self-Employment of Targeted Refugee Populations" reveals a set of clear federal assumptions about how states should go about designing projects to strengthen employment opportunities for refugees under the enhanced skills training grants. These requirements included:

- that the enhanced skills training projects should be the result of a carefully designed strategy to meet the needs of a specific group of refugees in a specific labor market environment and should take advantage of and be coordinated with existing services funded from other sources;
- that a successful enhanced skills training project should include three integrated components: (1) skills training (e.g., on-the-job training, customized training, or classroom training that includes OJT or a simulated job environment); (2) placement; and (3) post-placement services;
- that private sector participation should be encouraged to the maximum extent, as well as "innovative forms of public-private partnership," and that classroom training by public or private educational institutions should be

utilized only if carefully coordinated with work site simulation or actual on-site work experience;

- that training should focus on new or expanding sectors of local economies as well as on employment areas of interest to and appropriate for the characteristics of the targeted population;
- that project services should be specifically targeted to a particular segment of the refugee population that can be identified as "significantly disadvantaged" and for whom established services have been inappropriate or insufficiently intensive;
- that services should be targeted to refugees who are unemployed or underemployed and either receiving public assistance or at risk of inter-state secondary migration in order to secure cash assistance benefits;
- that the reasons for difficulties in entry into the labor force for the targeted population should be, in substantial measure, due to skills deficiencies which may include but are not limited to deficiencies in English language competencies;
- that placement services should be directed towards all skills training participants, including those exiting training before completion; and
- that the employment areas targeted by the skills training should have earnings sufficient to reduce the level of cash assistance needed by the family unit.

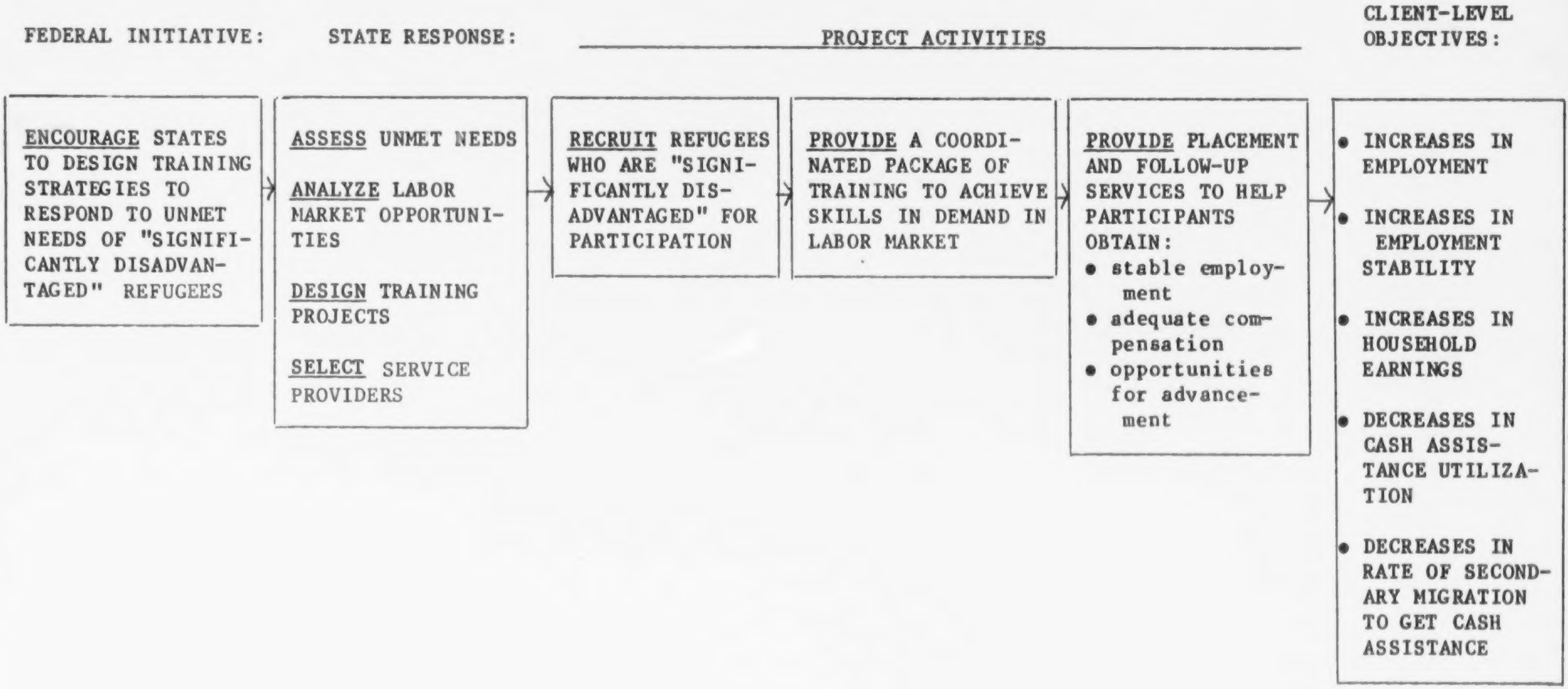
Thus, the federal objectives for the projects funded by the enhanced skills training grants (shown in the schematic diagram in Figure I-1) are to encourage the implementation of local projects that:

(A) identify and recruit refugees who are "significantly disadvantaged" for participation in enhanced skills training projects;

(B) provide these refugees with a coordinated package of skills training services to overcome skills deficiencies and achieve skills matched to labor market opportunities; and

Figure I-1

Logic of the Enhanced Skills Training Grants


FEDERAL INITIATIVE:
STATE RESPONSE:
PROJECT ACTIVITIES
CLIENT-LEVEL OBJECTIVES:
ENCOURAGE STATES TO DESIGN TRAINING STRATEGIES TO RESPOND TO UNMET NEEDS OF "SIGNIFICANTLY DISADVANTAGED" REFUGEES
ASSESS UNMET NEEDS
ANALYZE LABOR MARKET OPPORTUNITIES
DESIGN TRAINING PROJECTS
SELECT SERVICE PROVIDERS
RECRUIT REFUGEES WHO ARE "SIGNIFICANTLY DISADVANTAGED" FOR PARTICIPATION
PROVIDE A COORDINATED PACKAGE OF TRAINING TO ACHIEVE SKILLS IN DEMAND IN LABOR MARKET
PROVIDE PLACEMENT AND FOLLOW-UP SERVICES TO HELP PARTICIPANTS OBTAIN:
• stable employment
• adequate compensation
• opportunities for advancement
• INCREASES IN EMPLOYMENT
• INCREASES IN EMPLOYMENT STABILITY
• INCREASES IN HOUSEHOLD EARNINGS
• DECREASES IN CASH ASSISTANCE UTILIZATION
• DECREASES IN RATE OF SECONDARY MIGRATION TO GET CASH ASSISTANCE

(C) provide placement and follow-up services that would enable participants to obtain stable employment at adequate compensation rates and with opportunities for advancement.

Ultimately, these project achievements are intended to result in a series of inter-related outcomes for individual participants (who would otherwise be at risk of long-term or cyclical welfare dependency):

- increased employment;
- increased employment stability;
- increased earnings;
- decreased cash assistance utilization;
- decreased secondary migration to obtain cash assistance.

FEDERAL OBJECTIVES FOR THE MULTIPLE WAGE EARNER GRANTS

The Multiple Wage Earner Grants were designed by the federal government to respond to research findings that showed that the "most important single factor in propelling refugee households to economic self-sufficiency was the transition from single to multiple wage-earner households."[2]

The federal announcement of funding availability described the requirements of the multiple wage earner grants as follows:

- that projects should target non-head of household unemployed refugees from households of at least three members;
- that the target households should be on cash assistance, or other public assistance (including Food Stamps), or households with marginal earnings and documented need for services;
- that the target subgroups of "secondary wage earners" -- women, youth, older individuals, and other household members with little or no work experience in the United States and limited English -- should include groups that had suffered from a lack of access to employment

services, ESL, and supportive social services in the past (due to an emphasis on primary wage earners); and

- that multiple wage earner projects should develop comprehensive short-term services leading to employment for project participants, including outreach, employability planning, vocational English language training, short-term skills training, supportive services, and referral to other skills training resources in the community.

The logic of the multiple wage earner grants (shown in a schematic diagram in Figure I-2) is to encourage the implementation of local projects that

(a) recruit unemployed "secondary wage earners" from households with more than one potential wage-earner;
(b) identify and address barriers to the employment of more than one individual from the household; and
(c) assist participants to obtain jobs that increase the total household earnings.

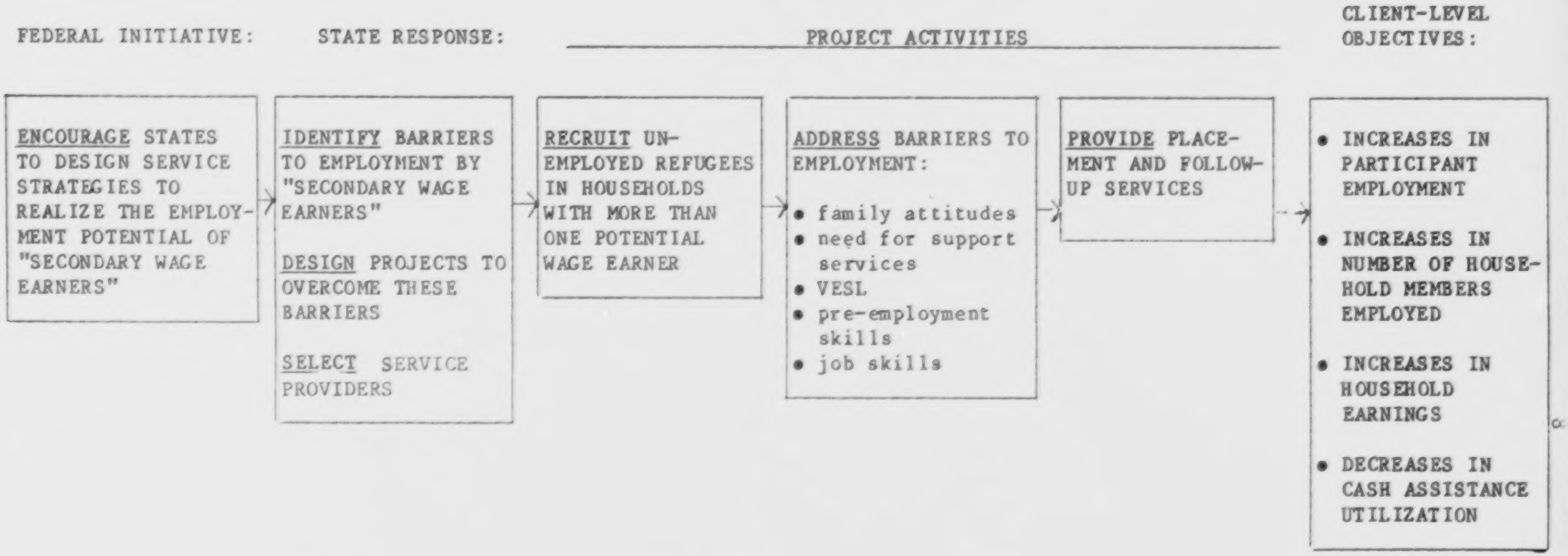
These objectives can be translated into the following inter-related client-level objectives:

- employment of the project participant;
- increased number of family members employed;
- increased household earnings; and
- decreased cash assistance utilization.

This initial formulation of the multiple wage earner program logic model has been modified over time in response to program experience in order to emphasize the federal objective of obtaining employment for as many unemployed individuals in a refugee household as possible, who are now referred to as "multiple wage earners" rather than "secondary wage earners." This recent formulation, illustrated by several multiple wage earner projects around the country that have received continuation funding under the ORR Comprehensive Discretionary Social Services (CDSS)

Figure I-2

Logic of the Multiple Wage Earner Grants


FEDERAL INITIATIVE:
STATE RESPONSE:
PROJECT ACTIVITIES
CLIENT-LEVEL OBJECTIVES:
ENCOURAGE STATES TO DESIGN SERVICE STRATEGIES TO REALIZE THE EMPLOYMENT POTENTIAL OF "SECONDARY WAGE EARNERS"
IDENTIFY BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT BY "SECONDARY WAGE EARNERS"
DESIGN PROJECTS TO OVERCOME THESE BARRIERS
SELECT SERVICE PROVIDERS
RECRUIT UNEMPLOYED REFUGEES IN HOUSEHOLDS WITH MORE THAN ONE POTENTIAL WAGE EARNER
ADDRESS BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT:
• family attitudes
• need for support services
• VESL
• pre-employment skills
• job skills
PROVIDE PLACEMENT AND FOLLOW-UP SERVICES
• INCREASES IN PARTICIPANT EMPLOYMENT
• INCREASES IN NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS EMPLOYED
• INCREASES IN HOUSEHOLD EARNINGS
• DECREASES IN CASH ASSISTANCE UTILIZATION

program, avoids the need to exclude unemployed primary wage earners from project eligibility in order to serve only "secondary wage earners."

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MULTIPLE WAGE EARNER AND ENHANCED SKILLS TRAINING GRANTS

The direct applicants for and grantees of the federal Multiple Wage Earner and Enhanced Skills Training grants were the states. Each state had the option of submitting an application for a single project or for several distinct projects within each type of grant. In some instances, states had already made a commitment to a particular project or projects including a particular project operator prior to the submission of the grant application to ORR. In other cases, a competitive selection process was undertaken by the state after the notification that the state had been awarded an ORR grant.

State applications were due on May 19, 1984 and grant awards were made in late summer 1984. Ultimately fourteen states were awarded Enhanced Skills Training grants, and five states were awarded Multiple Wage Earner grants. Start-up dates on the ORR grants to the states ranged from September 1984 through December 1984, with initial project periods scheduled for either 12 or 18 months. However, actual project start-ups were sometimes substantially delayed, especially in those states that waited until they had received notification of the ORR award to begin a competitive process to select a program operator. The last project to get underway began operation in September 1985.

SUMMARY OF KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The federal Enhanced Skills Training and Multiple Wage Earner grant initiatives are attempts to learn from recent social science findings on the process by which refugees achieve self-sufficiency. The findings from several studies that became available in 1982 and 1983 were:

- that some groups of refugees were remaining dependent on cash assistance for substantial periods of time due to barriers such as extremely limited English language skills, physical and emotional handicaps, and age; and

- that the most important single factor in propelling refugee households to economic self-sufficiency was the transition from single to multiple wage-earner households.[3]

The enhanced skills training grants were a response to the first of these research findings, as a strategy for serving refugee clients who were experiencing "protracted workforce entry and adjustment problems" by offering training, placement, and follow-up services that would result in stable employment at a wage rate sufficient to reduce reliance on cash assistance. The multiple wage earner grants were a direct response to the second finding, as a strategy to overcome the barriers to increasing the number of wage earners in refugee households. The overarching questions for the present study are (1) whether these strategic program designs were successful in enhancing the ability of refugee households to enter the labor market and reduce their dependence on public assistance; and (2) what lessons can be learned from these discretionary projects about how to replicate their successes and/or avoid problems they experienced in implementing their program designs.

The following chapters explore the answers to these questions in detail, moving from a descriptive level, to an analytic or explanatory level, and finally, to a normative level, which recommends how the federal government, states, and individual service providers should respond to the study findings.

At the descriptive level, this report provides answers to questions about the variations in individual projects, including:

- What do the local project environments look like?
- How were the target populations defined?
- What services were included in the program designs?
- What have been the characteristics of the actual participant populations?
- What services have actually been utilized?

- What outcomes have been achieved to date for project participants?
- What are the available indicators of costs and cost savings?

For the enhanced skills training projects, care has been taken to describe the types of training and training modalities that were utilized, and exactly what types of jobs were obtained for participants. For the multiple wage earner projects, special emphasis has been placed on the barriers to employment identified by the projects and what supportive services were considered necessary to overcome these barriers.

At the explanatory level, this report provides answers to questions about the extent to which the demonstration projects fulfilled the federal objectives, as well as questions about factors contributing to project effectiveness and barriers impeding success based on the cross-project comparisons. These questions include:

- How successfully did projects implement their intended designs?
- How successfully did projects reach their desired target populations?
- How well did the projects, as implemented, fulfill the federal requirements?
- How well did the project outcomes match the desired outcomes?
- What project implementation practices appear to have contributed to project effectiveness/lack of effectiveness, including:
    - the state role;
    - outreach practices;
    - client selection criteria;
    - type of training offered;
    - type and level of employer incentives or experience;
    - organizational type of service provider;
    - type of jobs targeted for job development;
    - labor market context;

-- welfare system context;
-- refugee demographics;
-- availability of support services;
-- type of clients targeted or served; and
-- relationship to other refugee services?

For the enhanced skills training projects, special emphasis has been placed on the relative effectiveness of different packages of skills training/placement/follow-up services and targeted occupations in achieving placements, job retention, and wage levels sufficient to reduce public assistance utilization. For the multiple wage earner projects, emphasis has been placed on identifying the apparent prerequisites for designing a comprehensive service package to meet the needs of specific subgroups within the "secondary wage earner" population (e.g., mothers with children; youth).

At the normative level, this report attempts to make recommendations that are supported by the descriptive and analytic findings. These conclusions have been phrased as "lessons to be learned," and are primarily oriented towards an audience of federal policymakers. However, it is hoped that the recommendations will also be useful to states in continuing and refining the successful aspects of the multiple wage earner and enhanced skills training strategies after the conclusion of the special project funding.

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY METHODOLOGY

The activities conducted as part of this study included three phases. During the first phase, the members of the research team reviewed existing written documents on the funded projects, including state applications and quarterly monitoring reports submitted to ORR. Preliminary telephone discussions were held with ORR central and regional staff as well as state and project staff and were used to complete brief descriptive matrices on each project. These matrices were used to guide selection of pretest and site visit samples, and to clarify the feasibility of collecting quantitative data on the clients served and the outcomes achieved by each of the discretionary projects. At the conclusion of the first phase, pretest site visits were made to two states (Virginia and Washington) to test the study design for the field work.

During the major on-site data collection phase of the study, one- to three-day field visits were completed to nine states:

Wisconsin
Nebraska
Missouri
New York
Arizona
Maryland
North Carolina
Georgia
New Jersey

The field visits, conducted between November 1985 and March 1986, were used to obtain a detailed picture of the individual projects, including their service design, organizational structure, project implementation experience, clients served, services provided, and employment outcomes achieved.[4] Based on the site visits and follow-up communication with each project by mail and telephone, detailed field notes and quantitative statistics were prepared for each project. These data have served as the framework for the cross-project descriptions and comparisons contained in this report.

During the third, or analytic, phase of the study, the summary data prepared for each project were used to answer questions about how successful the discretionary grant projects have been, as a whole, in meeting the federal program objectives, and what variations in project design, implementation, and local context appear to be important in influencing project outcomes.

ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

The remainder of this report is organized as follows:

- Chapter II provides an Overview of the Funded Projects, including a brief summary of each funded project and a discussion of the varied environmental contexts within which the projects were implemented.
- Chapter III describes and assesses the design and implementation of the Enhanced Skills Training Projects;
- Chapter IV describes and assesses the design and implementation of the Multiple Wage Earner Projects; and
- Chapter V summarizes the study conclusions and lessons to be learned.

CHAPTER I NOTES

[1] The most widely publicized of these studies was the Southeast Asian Refugee Self-Sufficiency Study completed by the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan during this period and released in its final form in January of 1985.

[2] Supplementary Information to Announcement of the Availability of Funding for "Demonstration Projects to Increase the Number of Wage Earners in Refugee and Entrant Households," March 19, 1984.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] A previous visit by research team members to Illinois (funded under another research effort) resulted in the collection of data on the MWE and EST projects in Rockford, Illinois.

II. OVERVIEW OF THE FUNDED PROJECTS

Each state receiving an Enhanced Skills Training (EST) or Multiple Wage Earner (MWE) grant could fund one or more local projects with the ORR discretionary funding. This evaluation examined the projects funded with four of the five Multiple Wage Earner grants and eight of the 14 Enhanced Skills Training Grants, as summarized in Figure II-1 and Figure II-2. Pretest visits were conducted to one additional MWE grantee and two additional EST grantees. At ORR's request, we excluded from the study two enhanced skills training grants that were used to develop self-employment opportunities through farming projects (in Arkansas and Vermont), an EST grant to Massachusetts that was subsequently terminated because it was determined that the planned services were not needed, and a small EST project in Kansas.

As shown in Figure II-1, the Enhanced Skills Training grants to the states were used to implement projects operated by 12 distinct organizational entities. Figure II-2 shows that the five state recipients of the Multiple Wage Earner grants also used these funds to implement projects operated by 12 different organizations. In most cases, in the remainder of this report, we will refer to the individual project, rather than the state grantee, as the primary unit of analysis. In this chapter, a brief thumbnail sketch is provided of the 24 funded projects. In addition, some of the important dimensions of the environmental context of these projects are described. The latter are particularly important because of the importance of contextual factors (e.g., the unemployment rate) for project outcomes and their influence on the potential for project replication.

BRIEF PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

In addition to the brief paragraphs below, a profile of each project has been included in the Appendix to this report.

Figure II-1

States Awarded Enhanced Skills Training Grants

States Studied	Grant Amount	Number of Local Projects
Georgia	$82,500	1 project
Illinois	$74,180	1 project
Maryland	$79,705	1 project
Nebraska	$148,843	1 project
North Carolina	$70,000	1 project
New Jersey	$161,888	2 projects
New York	$296,038	1 project (2 service sites)
Virginia (pretest site)	$212,398	1 project
Washington (pretest site)	$97,500	1 project
Wisconsin	$150,000	2 projects

Figure II-2

States Awarded Multiple Wage Earner Grants

States Studied	Grant Amount	Number of Local Projects
Arizona	$79,774	1 project
Illinois	$118,873	1 project
Missouri	$149,334	1 project
Washington (pretest site)	$150,000	4 projects
Wisconsin	$150,000	5 projects

Enhanced Skills Training Projects

Georgia used its EST grant of $82,500 to fund a project in Atlanta to serve refugees in the Atlanta metropolitan area who had experienced difficulties in obtaining employment, keeping jobs, or moving beyond entry level employment. Lutheran Ministries of Georgia, the funded operator of the project, was able to screen refugees from its regular ORR social-service funded caseload and refer refugees with a history of employment difficulties to the project. The EST strategy developed for Atlanta was to use on-the-job (OJT) training contracts or classroom training to assist clients in obtaining jobs. A goal of 46 job placements was set for the project.

Illinois received an EST grant of $74,180. This grant was used to fund a joint proposal from Goodwill Industries, the Rockford Mutual Assistance Association, and the local community college to provide machinist training to refugees in the town of Rockford. The project design targeted refugees who were receiving cash assistance, had been in the United States 36 months or more, and who could benefit from machinist training. A comprehensive service package was developed that included eight-week-long classroom skills training with an on-site VESL component, followed by active job development with local employers. A goal of 65 job placements was established for the project.

Maryland used its EST grant of $79,705 to fund a project operated by Associated Catholic Charities in Baltimore. Initially, the project was intended to develop a large group placement model for refugees in a new hotel that was nearly completed. This strategy was later changed to develop jobs with a variety of small employers in the areas of automotive repair, electroplating, machine shops, and silver plating, using two-month long OJT contracts as an incentive to employers to hire refugees. In order of priority, targeted clients included refugees on public assistance, refugees with low English skills, refugees with moderate English skills who were unskilled or needed vocational English language training, and refugees who were marginally employed. The project goal was to place 50 clients into jobs.

Nebraska received an EST grant of $148,843. These funds were used to support a project in Lincoln, operated by the Refugee Center, a community-based service provider that recently became independent of its parent agency, Catholic Social Services. Project services were targeted to all adult refugees receiving cash assistance, including new arrivals and all other refugees who were unemployed, underemployed, or in danger of secondary migration. The service package included the provision of group training in survival skills, VESL, and OJT contracts of 10 to 26 weeks duration to get local employers to take a chance on refugees they would not otherwise have hired. The project's placement goal was 60 individuals.

North Carolina used its EST grant of $70,000 to fund the Hmong Natural Association in Marion, North Carolina to provide services to Hmong refugees in a three county area. Services were targeted to individuals who were unemployed, employed but with family income below the poverty level, and/or employed but receiving public assistance. In practice, no clients were found who were still receiving public assistance. Several distinct project components were undertaken: (1) the provision of skills training in American farming methods; (2) a craft project to promote the production and sale of Hmong crafts; and (3) the provision of training and financial incentives to help participants obtain regular paid employment. Twenty-four-week long OJT contracts were the most commonly used tool to develop jobs with local employers. The project set a goal of placing 20 participants in jobs.

New Jersey received an EST grant of $161,888, which was used to fund two distinct projects, one in a three county area in northern New Jersey (Meadowlands) and one in Camden county. Although they were operated by two different organizations -- the International Institute in the north site and Catholic Community Services in the south site -- the projects were developed according to a unified design with a strong state role. In both sites, the New Jersey Department of Labor was also an active participant in the project, assisting the local refugee service provider to implement "customized training" (a variant of OJT) for refugee participants. Participants targeted for services by these projects were refugees receiving cash assistance, particularly individuals with little English or no U.S. work history. The combined placement goal for both service sites was 49 individuals.

New York State received the largest EST grant -- $296,038 -- to provide services to older refugees in two distinct neighborhoods in New York City. A project site in Brooklyn was designed to target services to Eastern European and Soviet refugees, while a project site in the Bronx was designed to target services to Southeast Asian refugees. The New York Association of New Americans (NYANA), a local affiliate of a national resettlement agency (HIAS), was selected to operate the project at both sites. Both sites were limited to serving refugees over 45 years of age. The intended project strategy was to use both OJT contracts and short-term classroom training in fields with an identified labor-market demand to locate jobs for participants. In practice, refugees have been more reluctant to utilize classroom training than anticipated, and employers have been more reluctant to utilize OJT contracts than anticipated, so the project has been more oriented towards direct job development and placement than expected. Vocationally oriented ESL classes of seven weeks duration have been provided at both sites. The project goal is to place 105 individuals in jobs.

Virginia also received a generous EST grant -- totalling $212,398 -- which was used to fund a project for refugees over 45 years of age in Fairfax County. The project was administered by the Fairfax County Department of Manpower Services and operated by Senior Employment Resources (SER), a nonprofit organization experienced in providing employment services to older workers. The funded project proposal was to use a combination of OJT contracts, ESL services, and classroom training and peer support to overcome employment barriers experienced by state role. In both sites, the New Jersey Department of Labor was also an active participant in the project, assisting the local refugee service provider to implement "customized training" (a variant of OJT) for refugee participants. Participants targeted for services by these projects were refugees receiving cash assistance, particularly individuals with little English or no U.S. work history. The combined placement goal for both service sites was 49 individuals.

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Washington State used its EST grant of $97,500 to fund a project in Seattle for refugees over 45 years of age who were on cash assistance or who had incomes below the poverty level. The project operator was Employment Opportunities Center (EOC), an agency that was experienced in serving refugees and was simultaneously operating several other employment projects, using ORR social service funds and Targeted Assistance funds. The EST project was distinct in its targeted client population -- older refugees -- but was similar to an ongoing project in its service strategy. The project strategy was to use either direct placement assistance or one of two forms of short-term employer financial incentives (2-6 week OJT contracts that were 50% subsidized, or 2-4 weeks of "try out employment" contracts that were 100% subsidized) to get jobs for participants. The project goal was to place 39 refugees in jobs.

Wisconsin received an EST grant of $150,000. Two EST projects were funded -- one in Eau Claire and one in Milwaukee. Both of these projects were operated by the local office of the Wisconsin Job Service, which is also the local provider in each site of employment services to refugees under regular ORR social service funding. The project design was to identify clients who could benefit from classroom skills training and to use a combination of direct placement and classroom training to place 63 refugees in jobs in Milwaukee and to place 32 refugees in jobs in Eau Claire. Targeted clients in each site included unemployed refugees on public assistance with additional barriers to employment, such as limited English, limited education, limited work experience in the United States, large families, older age, or handicaps.

Multiple Wage Earner Projects

Arizona submitted a proposal for a MWE project in Tucson which was funded at a level of $79,774. The project was initially administered by a mutual assistance association, but after three months, the MAA withdrew from the project and administration was transferred to the

Refugee Education Project of Pima County Adult Education, an experienced provider of ESL and refugee vocational training services. The Tucson project had a broad target population, although it was funded as a MWE project. Targeted clients included refugees over 45, homebound women with children, other secondary wage earners, welfare dependent or partially self-sufficient refugees, and subsistence level wage earners. The service strategy included the provision of classroom training (in electronics assembly), the provision of short-term OJT with a variety of small employers, and direct job placement services (through referral) to find employment for participants. A number of enrollees turned out to be refugees who were already employed who wanted an opportunity for job upgrading. What made this project different from services in the ongoing local refugee service system was an enriched set of support services, including day care, day care transportation, and driver's education. The project goal was to place 60 refugees in employment.

Illinois was one of three states (including also Wisconsin and Washington) that received both EST and MWE grants. The Multiple Wage Earner grant to Illinois of $118,873 was used to fund a second project in Rockford by the same consortium that was selected to operate the Enhanced Skills Training grant -- Goodwill Industries, the Rockford Mutual Assistance Association, and the local community college. The MWE grant was targeted to refugees who were on cash assistance, had been in the U.S. over 36 months and who had at least one member of their household already employed. In practice, this translated into predominantly women participants. Three distinct types of paid supported work/training were provided by Goodwill Industries, which directly hired project participants to work at jobs: (1) sorting nuts and bolts; (2) sorting rags or repairing upholstery; and (3) working in food service jobs (preparing meals for the elderly). Day care was available to project participants. The project goal was to place 27 individuals. Presently, Goodwill has been slow to place these employee-trainees in permanent jobs with employers in the community.

Missouri received an MWE grant of $149,334, which it used to support a project in St. Louis operated by a four agency consortium. This consortium included two voluntary resettlement agencies -- International Institute and Catholic Charities -- and two other agencies with experience serving refugees -- Jewish Employment and Vocational Services (JEVS) and The English Language School. The project was targeted to refugee women who had not previously worked for pay, plus any other secondary wage earner on cash assistance, or laid off, or in danger of secondary migration. The core service in this project was the provision of self-paced (usually about 4 weeks long) classroom skills training in power sewing in combination with VELT, designed to enable participants to find jobs in the garment industry. Direct placement services were available to those who did not need training to obtain jobs. The placement goal for the project was to find jobs for 90 individuals.

Washington State received an MWE grant of $150,000, which it used to fund four different projects -- two in Spokane, one in Olympia, and one in Vancouver. Each project had its own distinct strategy, except that the two projects in Spokane were initially designed to provide an integrated package of services for the same participants.

The MWE project in Olympia was operated by the Refugee Forum, a community-based refugee service agency. Targeted clients included adult refugees in households with more than one potential wage earner, youth aged 16 to 21, and older refugees, aged 45 to 65. The project goal was to place 15 refugees in jobs. Service strategies included arranging for one to two weeks of unpaid work experience, providing classroom training in housekeeping, and direct job development efforts. A casual labor exchange was also used to supplement household income on a short-term basis.

The Vancouver project, operated by the Southeast Asian Refugee Center -- a mutual assistance association consortium -- targeted refugees on cash assistance or with incomes below the poverty level in the same three categories as the Olympia project (youth, older workers, and adults in households with more than one potential wage earner). In

Vancouver, the project strategy was to provide a four-week training curriculum using classroom training and VELT to help participants get jobs in electronics assembly. Partway through the project, the electronics industry started laying off workers, so the project developed jobs for its participants in other industries. The goal was to place 19 refugees in jobs.

In Spokane, the Washington Association of Churches designed a project to serve homebound women with limited English. The strategy was to provide classroom training in sewing on home sewing machines, along with tutoring in English, to enable participants to obtain work as seamstresses. Direct placements were also made. The placement goal from this project was five placements. The second MWE project in Spokane was operated by Lao Family Community, a mutual assistance association which was originally designated to place participants who had been trained by the Washington Association of Churches project. In practice, this project was more successful in recruiting and providing direct job placement services to its own client population of secondary wage earners. The project goal was to place ten refugees in jobs.

Wisconsin's MWE grant totalled $150,000. The state used this sum to fund five different projects -- two in Milwaukee, one in Eau Claire, one in Wausau, and one in Oshkosh. Each project had a slightly different set of services or service strategy, although all the projects targeted youth, women, and other secondary wage earners. Four of the five projects (all except Eau Claire) were operated by local Hmong mutual assistance associations, which were believed by the state to be well-suited to do outreach to secondary wage earners and to convince Hmong refugees that they should pursue employment. In Wausau the Wausau Area Hmong Mutual Association used counseling, job development efforts, child care certification training and assistance in marketing crafts to help enhance household income. However, the lack of permanent jobs, plus the attractiveness to refugees of seasonal work harvesting ginseng hampered placement efforts in this local area. The project had a goal of placing 30 refugees in employment.

In Eau Claire, the Western Dairyland Community Action Agency developed an eight-week cashiers' training class for youth, and a child care certification class for women, in addition to direct placement efforts. The goal was to place 51 refugees in jobs.

The Lao Hmong Association in Oshkosh hired staff who developed a five-week classroom training curriculum in production line power sewing. Women who wanted to do piece work in their own homes were trained in beading and decorative lacing of boots and shoes. After training, job development efforts were undertaken in the fields for which the women had been trained. Management of this project was turned over to a community action agency about mid-way through the operating period.

In Milwaukee, the Hmong American Friendship Association and Lao Family Community were both funded to operate similar projects offering home day care certification training, referral to other training projects in the community, and direct job development and job placement assistance. The Hmong American Friendship Association also offered an eight-week vocational ESL class. The placement goals were 59 placements by Hmong American Friendship Association and 55 placements by Lao Family Community.

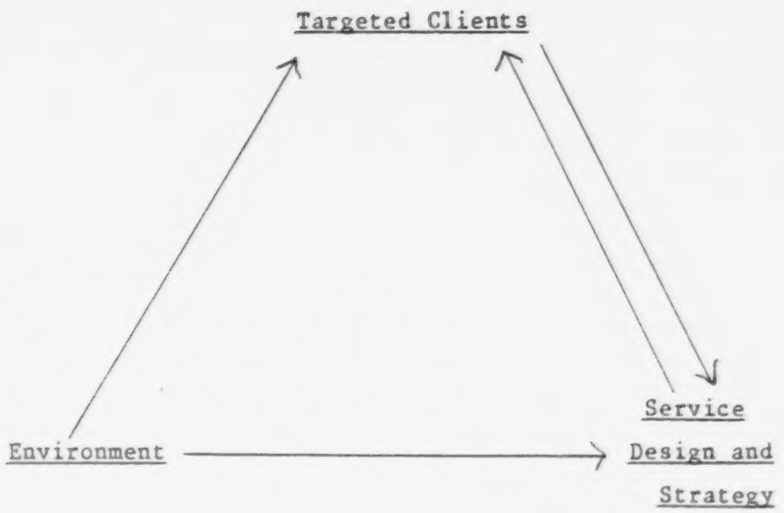
PROJECT DIMENSIONS

The Multiple Wage Earner and Enhanced Skills Training projects can all be viewed as the result of an interaction among three distinct program elements: (1) the refugee population targeted for services and the particular employment disadvantages experienced by this group; (2) the service strategy and service package developed to assist participants in overcoming their disadvantages; and (3) the local environment or community context which offered both opportunities for and constraints on the achievement of project goals.

As shown in Figure II-3, the third project element -- the local environment -- directly influenced both the number and characteristics of refugees who were in need of assistance from each of the demonstration projects and the types of employment strategies that were necessary

Figure II-3

Relationships Among Project Elements


Targeted Clients
Environment
Service Design and Strategy

or feasible at each site. In any given environment, the choice of a particular target population and the selection of a particular service strategy were choices that were mutually interdependent -- as shown by the double feedback arrows in Figure II-3. Conceptually, the Enhanced Skills Training projects usually designed a particular service strategy (e.g., some form of training compatible with local labor market needs) and then selected a group of refugees who could benefit from that training, while the Multiple Wage Earner projects usually selected a particular target group in need of employment services (e.g., women and youth) and then designed a package of services around the occupational interests and service needs of that group. In practice, however, the distinctions between the two types of projects often became blurred.

CONTEXT OF THE FUNDED PROJECTS

The next two chapters will address the relationships among the targeted clients, service designs, and outcomes for the Enhanced Skills Training projects (Chapter III) and the Multiple Wage Earner projects (Chapter IV). In preparation for that discussion, a brief overview of the variations in project contexts is provided here. These variations not only influenced the success of each individual project, but also have important implications for the ability to replicate the effects of any project in a different site.

We have identified three aspects of the local project environment that exercised a tremendous influence on the types of refugees available for and in need of services, the types of service strategies that could be attempted, and the outcomes achieved by the projects. These include:

(1) the characteristics of the local welfare system;
(2) the characteristics of the local economy and labor market; and
(3) the characteristics of the refugee population residing in each area.

Local Welfare Systems

The characteristics of local welfare systems influenced several different aspects of strategic planning by the demonstration projects because of the influence of welfare system characteristics on such factors as how many refugees in the project area were likely to be eligible for and/or receiving cash assistance, whether welfare was perceived as an attractive alternative (powerful disincentive) to employment, whether welfare could provide support while refugees participated in short-term training, and whether secondary migration to another state in search of more attractive welfare benefits was an attractive choice for individuals or households. The actual welfare system features that influence the above factors include:

- whether the state's AFDC program is available to two-parent households in addition to single-parent households;
- whether the level of AFDC benefits is high, medium or low; and
- whether county or state General Relief programs offer attractive benefits to households not eligible for AFDC.

Figure II-4 summarizes the variations in the welfare benefits available in each of the states receiving discretionary grants. The projects faced three very different types of environments with respect to the availability and attractiveness of welfare as an alternative to work. In three states, which account for 10 of the 24 projects, welfare benefits were either high or moderate, and AFDC-UP programs made benefits available to two-parent households in which both parents were unemployed. For these projects, welfare could and did constitute a serious work disincentive for project participants, particularly if the jobs obtained for participants did not offer health benefits, did not pay more than minimum wage, or appeared to be unstable or undesirable for some other reason. For large families in this welfare environment, the work disincentives continue to be compelling.

The second type of welfare environment, which described the circumstance of four states and nine of the 24 projects, includes states

Figure II-4

Variations in Welfare System Context

	States in Each Category	Number of Projects in Each Group
Group 1: Benefit levels are high. Two-parent households are categorically eligible for AFDC. Several states in this group have state or locally-funded General Relief for employables. Result: Welfare can be a serious work disincentive.	Wisconsin New York New Jersey	10
Group 2: Benefit levels moderate to high. AFDC is either not available to two-parent households or two-parent refugee households are not usually able to meet the strict work history requirements for AFDC. Result: Welfare is a serious work disincentive but only for the first 18 months after arrival. Then a choice between secondary migration and employment needs to be made by individual refugee households.	Washington Illinois Virginia Maryland	9
Group 3: Benefit levels are low. AFDC is either not available to two-parent households or work history requirements make AFDC inaccessible by most refugees. Result: Welfare is not an attractive alternative to work.	Arizona North Carolina Nebraska Missouri Georgia	5
	TOTAL:	24

with high benefit levels but an absence of ongoing welfare eligibility for two-parent refugee households, beyond the initial period of federally-funded RCA eligibility. This is either due to an absence of AFDC-UP programs for the general populace or to strict administration of work history requirements for AFDC-UP eligibility, which refugee households can rarely meet. For projects in these states, some refugees were likely to be slow to enter employment until close to the end of the RCA eligibility period. When welfare eligibility ended, households would enter a period of intense financial crisis, and thus be receptive to employment services. For small households and single individuals, work may be an attractive option from the first; for larger families, a desire to continue receiving welfare benefits may lead to secondary migration away from these states.

The third type of welfare environment, which describes the experience of five states and five of the 24 projects, consists of states with low benefit levels. In these states, welfare was not an attractive alternative to employment, whether or not AFDC was available to two-parent households. Newly arriving refugees faced the choice of obtaining employment or migrating to another state at the very outset. In this environment, so long as projects could develop decent jobs for their participants, work motivation was not a problem.

Local Labor Market Opportunities

The aspects of the local labor market environment that influenced project feasibility and effectiveness included: the unemployment rate, how varied the local employment base was, what sectors of the economy were in decline or expanding, and what particular opportunities there were for entry level jobs in occupations that were attractive to the refugees. Four distinct clusters of project sites emerge, as shown in Figure II-5. In the first group, low employment levels and expanding local economies ensured that jobs would be available in a variety of industries and occupations. In the second group, large diverse local economies meant that a variety of entry level jobs could be found in both the manufacturing and service sectors, even if local economies were still recovering from the recession. Projects in the third and fourth

Figure II-5

Variations in Labor Market Context

	Projects in Each Category	Number of Projects
Group 1: Especially low unemployment (3-6%). Jobs available in a variety of industries/occupations.	Tucson, Arizona	1
	Fairfax, Virginia	1
	Marion, North Carolina	1
	Lincoln, Nebraska	1
	Atlanta, Georgia	1
		5
Group 2: Diverse economy. Job opportunities available in several industries/occupations including manufacturing.	Baltimore, Maryland	1
	New York City, New York	1
	Seattle, Washington	1
	Spokane, Washington	2
	St. Louis, Missouri	1
	Vancouver, Washington	1
	Oshkosh, Wisconsin	1
		8
Group 3: More limited economy. Manufacturing sector in decline or nonexistent. Service jobs available.	Rockford, Illinois	2
	Eau Claire, Wisconsin	2
	Wausau, Wisconsin	1
	Milwaukee, Wisconsin	3
	Olympia, Washington	1
		9
Group 4: High unemployment (10-12%).	Camden, New Jersey	1
	Meadowlands, New Jersey	1
		2
	TOTAL:	24

groups faced the greatest challenge in terms of their labor market environment. In the third group, manufacturing jobs were generally not available, due to declining industry or a more limited economy. In the fourth group, general unemployment levels were still at the double-digit level (10-12%).

Refugee Population

The total refugee population, date of arrival, level of cash assistance utilization, ethnicity, age, and family composition of the refugee households in each project area are variables which affected how high priority client groups were defined, how outreach was conducted, who operated the project, and what services were necessary to overcome employment barriers. There are only two points we would like to emphasize in this overview. First, the increasingly diverse ethnic composition of the refugee population in most sites was reflected in many sites by an effort to operate a project that would serve a variety of ethnic groups. Although Southeast Asian refugees were described as the predominant refugee group served in 11 projects and the only group served in an additional ten projects, most projects targeted outreach efforts to a broader refugee population including Eastern Europeans, Cubans, Iranians, Angolans, Ethiopians, and Afghans. One project targeted Eastern Europeans as its predominant client group.

Second, the projects appeared to respond to an especially broad population of refugees, in terms of date of arrival. Several projects consciously targeted services to refugees who had been in the U.S. more than 36 months; most did outreach to and recruited participants from refugees who had been in the U.S. up to five or six years or longer, as well as to more recent arrivals. Thus, these projects reflect the diversity of the full range of their refugee populations in their local communities.

These contextual variables represent the fixed conditions each state and each local site had to take into account in designing an effective service strategy. They also explain why each project had to do careful planning to refine any generic job training or job placement model to fit its own unique configuration of refugee clients, labor market constraints and opportunities, and welfare system context.

III. ASSESSMENT OF THE ENHANCED SKILLS TRAINING PROJECTS

As described above, the Enhanced Skills Training program had three major objectives:

- to identify and recruit refugees whose labor market difficulties were directly related to skills deficiencies, including but not limited to English language deficiencies;
- to provide these refugees with a coordinated package of skills training/placement/follow-up services to overcome their deficiencies and develop skills that matched local labor market opportunities; and
- to assist clients in obtaining stable employment at compensation rates sufficient to reduce the level of cash assistance support needed to sustain their families.

This chapter discusses the impetus for and planning of EST projects, including the location of projects; describes strategies developed by the various projects implemented under the EST program to achieve program objectives; assesses their success in achieving their goals; and analyzes the factors that contributed to their outcomes. The chapter begins with an overview of our major findings.

OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

In general, the EST projects were unable to place participants in jobs that offered high wages, fringe benefits, stable employment, and opportunities for advancement. Only a small proportion of placements, for instance, were made into jobs paying over $3.65 per hour. These shortfalls in program outcomes can be traced, in part, to a number of implementation problems.

First, while many of the EST proposals appeared to be responsive to the ORR grant announcement, it appears that in practice few of the EST projects understood or were committed to the intent of the federal program. In implementing the program, states and projects often did little to ascertain whether a lack of skills or a need to upgrade skills stood between clients and stable employment and increased earnings. Nor did projects methodically assess local labor markets using labor market statistics and economic forecasts to determine whether there were jobs for which training would prepare refugees.

Second, in implementing projects, agencies tended to choose clients based on specified eligibility criteria -- e.g. age, cash assistance status, etc. -- rather than the need for or ability to benefit from training. It was unclear, in examining most client files, that a lack of skills had been a barrier to gainful employment or to job upgrading in the past. In many sites, eligibility criteria even stood in the way of finding clients who would most benefit from training. Many of the cash assistance clients enrolled in EST, as well as the older workers (who were targeted exclusively by three of the EST sites), had no U.S. work experience or transferrable job skills to be enhanced through training. Project staff usually determined that an initial job, even at minimum wage, was the best that could be done for these clients at the present time. They felt that already employed refugees might learn more from the training projects, but these individuals were often without the necessary time or resources to engage in training.

Third, project staff at several of the EST project staff were ambivalent, at best, and openly opposed, at worst, to training. One project held that they would enroll a client in training only if a client really wanted training and it was not too expensive. Another project tried, generally with success, to place clients directly in jobs before enrolling them in training. While perhaps a realistic assessment of the best strategy for the clients they had enrolled, this attitude did not permit an adequate test of the Enhanced Skills Training model. Yet, these placements were counted as EST outcomes in monitoring project performance. Most projects appreciated having a capacity to use OJT approaches for clients, but they believed OJT had greater value as an incentive to employers than as a way of enhancing the skills of employees.

PROJECT PLANNING AND ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING PROJECTS

Impetus for and planning of the Enhanced Skills Training projects took two distinct forms. In three states which accounted for about half the project sites, the state refugee office assumed leadership in designing the projects, whereas in the other seven states, the service providers who would ultimately implement the projects took the lead.

In the former cases, the state office -- generally in consultation with experienced and interested providers -- wrote proposals to ORR based on a general assessment of needs and the office's own view of appropriate strategies. In one case, the state identified employment services for older refugees as an unmet need; in the other two states, there was a particular interest in expanding the employment resources targeted to refugees who were on cash assistance. Upon approval of their state applications by ORR, these states recruited particular providers or issued Requests for Proposals to elicit proposals from providers who were interested in offering the services described by the state or serving the targeted population group. Generally, agencies that had already been serving refugees chose to respond, drawing upon their experiences in developing proposals and designing service projects. The state staff then reviewed the proposals, and selected one or more service agencies to receive project funding. Thereafter, the state staff remained involved in implementation through monitoring activities and problem-solving sessions.

In the second situation, one or more service providers, knowing of the ORR announcement of the availability of funds for Enhanced Skills Training grants, developed proposals and requested that their states transmit the proposals to ORR. With two exceptions, the provider agencies that initiated project proposals were already operating programs for refugees, although they were generally inexperienced in providing skills training. They saw the EST program as a way to expand the existing level of resources for training; to add a training component to their job counseling and placement services; and/or to target a specific subgroup within the refugee population, presumably one that had not been adequately served under existing services. In the two sites that were exceptions to this pattern, EST provided an opportunity for the entry of new service providers into the service system without decreasing the level of funding available to other providers. In these cases, the prospective EST service providers had considerable experience working with other hard-to-place populations (the developmentally disabled, in one case, and the elderly, in the other), and they encouraged the states to draw upon this prior relevant experience.

Given the planning process described above, it is not surprising that most of the projects have been implemented by agencies that have worked for many years in the refugee field. Six of the implementing agencies are local affiliates of private voluntary agencies that provide reception and placement services under State Department funding, as well as employment services under ORR social service funding. Three agencies have previously provided employment services to refugees under ORR social service or Targeted Assistance funding. One provider is a mutual assistance association that had previously received Highland Lao Initiative funding. The two agencies new to refugee services developed institutional linkages to established refugee service providers prior to proposing their services. In one case, the agency is a subcontractor to the county agency administering refugee services; in the other case, the agency formed a consortium with a local mutual assistance association and the community college that provides English language training to refugees.

CLIENT CHARACTERISTICS

In proposing EST projects, states followed the guidelines suggested by ORR in its grant announcement, choosing one or more of the groups of refugees mentioned in the announcement. As shown in Figure III-1, these included: refugees on cash assistance; refugees with large families; individuals with physical, emotional or psychological impairments; refugees over 45 years of age; and those with limited English or no work history in the U.S.

The following typology is based on the variations among the projects in identifying target groups. The four main choices were:

Figure III-1

Eligibility and Targeting Criteria of EST Projects

No. of Projects	Eligibility Criteria	Priority Target Groups
3	Older refugees (over 45)	1. On Cash Assistance or below poverty level 2. Needing help with finding/upgrading employment
1	Hmong refugees	1. Unemployed, underemployed, income below poverty level 2. On Cash Assistance 3. All others
5	On Cash Assistance	Combination of factors, such as: 1. Low English or education 2. Limited work history 3. Large family 4. Older or handicapped 5. Unemployed or underemployed 6. Newly arrived 7. At risk of secondary migration
1	At least one of the target criteria:	1. Cash Assistance 2. Employment problems 3. Limited English 4. Age, physical, emotional problems 5. Underemployment
1	At least one of the target criteria:	1. Cash Assistance 2. Low English skills 3. Marginal employment
1	At least one of the target criteria:	1. Cash Assistance 2. In U.S. 36 months or more 3. Those who need machinist training

(1) Refugees who were Members of Cash Assistance Cases. In five projects, a refugee had to be on cash assistance to be served by the EST grant. Target characteristics, in addition, also included low skills levels, poor work history, limited English and education, underemployment, etc. Client characteristics indicate that most of the clients in these five projects were, in fact, on cash assistance upon enrollment in the EST project. In addition, the majority fell within the target group in terms of having one or more of the following problems: weak job histories, little education, or large families. The majority were male. Ethnicity was mixed; in some sites a majority were Southeast Asians, whereas in others there was an even distribution of Southeast Asians, Eastern Europeans and others. In two of these projects, more than 55 percent of the clients were single; in a third, more than 40 percent were single. Information on family composition was not available from the others.

(2) Older Refugees (Over 45 Years of Age). In three states, which comprised three projects in four sites, the eligible client pool consisted only of refugees over 45 years of age. (In one of these sites, 50% of the client population also had to be on cash assistance.) Other characteristics of the clients served at these projects were extremely varied, both within and across projects. In two sites, for example, over 70% of all clients had 12 or more years of education, while in the remaining two sites the clients had virtually no formal education. In three sites, the majority of clients were Southeast Asian, but in one site, almost all refugees were from the Soviet Union or Eastern Europe. Within projects, some clients had been in the U.S. for more than three years, while others were new arrivals. Most were male heads of small households. Welfare utilization varied from 25% to 100% across projects.

(3) Refugees Belonging to a Single Ethnic Group in Need of Assistance. In one EST site, the project targeted a single ethnic group, the Hmong. (In two additional localities that were categorized as targeting cash assistance recipients, the vast majority of un- and underemployed refugees were Hmong, leaving it unlikely that members of other nationalities would apply for services.) In the site that

established Hmong refugees as the formal target population, the majority of clients were male heads of large households. The educational level of clients was mixed, most refugees spoke some English and most had been employed at some point in the U.S. There was no cash assistance utilization among clients.

(4) Refugees Possessing One or More of a Variety of Employment Handicaps. The remaining three projects did not limit themselves to a single criterion such as cash assistance status, age or ethnicity. Instead they looked for clients with at least one of a variety of characteristics that would make them hard-to-place in jobs. These characteristics included being on cash assistance, having prior problems finding or holding jobs, having limited English, or older age, or physical or emotional limitations. In one project, clients were screened to determine that they in fact had problems that impeded their ability to hold jobs. In the other two projects, however, eligibility requirements were interpreted more loosely. The clients served in these projects were most often male heads of households or single persons. The majority had previous work experience in the United States. One of these two projects was basically a program for new arrivals, while the other was designed in theory for hard-to-serve problem cases that had never reached resolution.

Other characteristics of the clients actually enrolled in services at the different EST sites are summarized in Figures III-2, III-3, and III-4. These tables show:

- that most EST projects served both male and female clients, although males were in the majority in all the EST projects and comprised over 75% of all clients at three projects;
- that most EST projects served primarily heads of households, including male heads of two-parent households, single parents, and single individuals. However, two projects served a significant percentage of cleints (over 20%) who were not the primary wage earners in their households;

Figure III-2

Characteristics of EST Clients: Sex, Family Position, Family Size[a]

Sex

	75% or more male	50-74% male	Data Not Available
No. of Projects	3	9	1

Family Position

	75% or more head or primary wage earner (including single-person households)	50-74% head	Less than 50% head	Data Not Available
No. of Projects	8 Range: 79-100%	2 1-59% head 1-73% head	0	3

Modal Family Size

	Modal size - 1	Modal size - 2-3	Modal size - 6 or more	Data Not Available
No. of Projects	6	2	3	2

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[a] The number of projects shown in this figure totals 13 because the two service sites at the New York City EST project were disaggregated for the purpose of describing client characteristics.

Figure III-3

Characteristics of EST Clients: Previous Work History, Education, and English[a]

Work History

	50% or more clients with U.S. work history	Less than 50% of clients with U.S. work history	Data not available
No. of Projects	3	4	6

English Level

	50% or more clients with very limited English	25-50% of clients with very limited English	Less than 25% clients with very limited English	Data not available
No. of Projects	2	3	3	5

Educational Level

	40% or more clients with 12 or more years of education	40% or more clients with under 6 years of education	Data not available
No. of Projects	5	4	4

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[a] The number of projects shown in this figure totals 13 because the two service sites at the New York City EST project were disaggregated for the purpose of describing client characteristics.

Figure III-4

Characteristics of EST Clients: Ethnicity, Length of Time in U.S., Welfare Status[a]

Ethnicity

	75% or more SE Asian	50-74% SE Asian	Less than 50% SE Asian	Data not available
No. of Projects	8	2	3	0

Length of Time in U.S.

	Largest group of clients in U.S. 36 mos. or more	Largest group of clients in U.S. 1-3 years	Largest group of clients in U.S. less than 1 year	Data not available
No. of Projects	5	2	3	3

Welfare Status

	90-100% receiving cash grant at entry	26-50% receiving cash grant at entry	25% or less receiving cash grant at entry	Data not available
No. of Projects	7	1	4	1

[a] The number of projects shown on this figure totals 13 because the two service sites at the New York City EST project were disaggregated for the purpose of describing client characteristics.

- that because of the high proportion of single individuals served at many EST projects, the modal family size was one person at six of the nine projects for which these data are available. However, three projects did serve clients whose modal family size was six or more;
- that roughly half of the projects that gave us data on previous U.S. work experience for their clients served a majority of clients with no U.S. work history, while half the projects served a majority of clients who had previous work history in the U.S.;
- that the English fluency of project clients was mixed both within and across projects, with the proportion of clients estimated as having very limited English skills ranging from a low of 12% to a high of 98%;
- that projects fell into two distinct categories on the formal educational levels of their clients. Five of nine projects who reported this data item served 40% or more clients with at least 12 years of education, while the remaining four served 40% or more clients with under six years of formal education;
- that the majority of EST projects served predominantly Southeast Asian refugees, but that at three projects, Southeast Asians made up less than 50% of the client population;
- that the EST projects varied in the length of time most of their clients had been in the U.S. Some projects were highly cohesive, either with most clients being new arrivals or most clients being refugees who had been in the U.S. 36 months or longer. Others served a more diverse range of clients. At half of the projects that made these data available, the largest client group was refugees who had already been in the U.S. 36 months or longer;
- finally, that the EST projects fell into two distinct groups according to whether a very high proportion of

clients were receiving a cash grant at project entry (seven projects out of 12 with these data) or a very low proportion were receiving cash assistance (four projects out of 12).

Thus, not all projects served refugees who could be termed "significantly disadvantaged," as indicated by the data on English proficiency and educational level. Not all refugees served by the EST projects were receiving cash assistance, although they may have been unemployed at the time of program entry.

Recruitment Strategies

Recruitment strategies employed by various projects were dependent upon the project locations within the refugee service delivery system. Recruitment ranged along the continuum described below.

- Active Recruitment (1 Project): Because this project was located in an agency that had few links with the refugee system prior to involvement in the EST program, it found it had to recruit actively within the refugee community. It had virtually no referrals from other local refugee-serving agencies, although the agency did receive some referrals from the county agency administering refugee funds.
- Networking with Other Agencies to Recruit (7 Projects): These projects used staff in other refugee-serving agencies to recruit clients, including cash assistance caseworkers, MAAs, other job developers. Often, the projects used some proactive recruiting strategies as well, including brochures, newspaper articles, and open houses.
- Recruitment Through Colocation with Other Refugee Services (4 Projects): These agencies are the central point through which all refugees seeking employment services must pass. In two agencies, a large range of services are available and refugees simply were referred to the EST program after agency intake and screening if it was deemed appropriate. Since these agencies

had sufficient resources to deal with a broad range of refugee clients elsewhere in the agency, the EST programs could be selective about which refugees were appropriate for EST. In two other projects, however, other service resources were scarce and the EST program ended up accepting clients who were not members of high priority target groups, and, in some cases, were even of questionable eligibility, according to EST project criteria.

For the most part, the EST projects were not well-integrated into comprehensive local case management systems for refugee services except in those instances where services were centralized, as described above. In most places, a coordinated case management system did not exist in the locality. In a few sites, where case management systems were in operation, state officials had expected the case managers to identify appropriate clients for EST and refer them for services, but this did not occur.

SERVICE APPROACHES

EST projects varied in the services they provided and their strategies for placing refugees in employment, and offered a broad array of employment-related services. Figure III-5 contains a complete list of potential services; however, no single project offered all of these services. Given the ORR requirement that EST grants were to be used to fund training/placement/follow-up services, it is not surprising to find that all but one of the projects made at least some skills training available to participants. As will be discussed below, however, training was not provided to all project participants. The basic types of training provided included classroom skills training, on-the-job training (OJT), and English language training. Figure III-6 describes the range of skills training services offered by the EST projects. In addition, projects offered employment assessment, job readiness preparation and counseling services, job development, job placement services, follow-up services, and a variety of supportive services such as child care and transportation.

Figure III-5

Overview of Services Provided by EST Projects

Category	Activities That Might Be Included
Pre-Employment Assessment and Orientation	• Assessment of skills, including English language ability • Assessment of employment preferences and transferrable skills • Job search techniques • Orientation to the work place and/or community • Job clubs for peer support while searching for work
Training in Vocational Skills	• Classroom training, in which a teacher or trainer imparts specific vocational skills, such as electronic assembly or power sewing • On-the-Job Training (OJT) at the work site, with wages subsidized for a brief period under contract with the employer • "Customized training" (training in vocational skills that are required to perform a specific job for a specific employer) • Try-Out Employment at a work site where the employer is offered a 100% wage subsidy for the first two weeks of employment
Training in Language Skills	• English as a second language (ESL) • Vocational English language training (VELT or VESL)
Job Development	• Proactive outreach to employers to persuade them to consider hiring refugees

Figure III-5 (continued)

Category	Activities That Might Be Included
Placement and Follow-up	• Placement after training (as contrasted with "direct placement" below) • Direct placement, without providing formal training (see definitions of classroom, customized, and OJT training activities above) • Job search assistance, in which project staff help refugees identify employment opportunities and accompany them to interviews • Counseling and support, e.g., encouraging refugees to stay on the job • Negotiation, e.g., working through problems that arise with both employers and refugees • Interpretation, e.g., translating as needed during interviews and/or for the first few days on the job • Verifying at specified intervals the numbers of refugees, officially placed by the project, who have retained these jobs
Supportive Services	• Child care, transportation, driver education • Referral to other sources for whatever services are not available through the project

Figure III-6

Skills Training Services Provided By EST Projects

Service	Number of Projects For Which This Was a Primary Strategy	Number of Projects For Which This Was a Secondary Strategy
SKILLS TRAINING:		
Classroom Skills Training	1 (machinist training)	5 1 - slots purchased from JTPA 2 - slots purchased through local tech. college 1 - farming course 1 - slots purchased from experienced training agency
OJT to Upgrade Client Skills and/or as a Subsidy to Employer	6 (generally small firms)	3
English Language	0	8 2 - VELT 6 - Basic ESL
PLACEMENT:		
Direct Placement (without prior training)	5 (including all older refugee projects)	4

Assessment

Upon enrolling clients or as part of the enrollment process, all EST projects did an assessment to determine barriers to employment. For the most part, these assessments focused on the client's previous employment history and language capacity at the time of the interview. Few projects utilized special tests or techniques designed to identify skill deficits hindering access to employment or aptitudes for specific vocations. While standardized skills assessments were not required under the terms of the grants, they could have helped projects determine which refugees in the target groups could be helped most by the available training.

There were two principal reasons why projects tended not to use formal skills assessments. First, some projects believed that skill deficits were not the barrier to employment, but that clients were unemployed because (1) they had not been served previously by employment services; or (2) employers needed incentives to try them out in jobs. These projects did not provide most clients with skills training, preferring to do direct placements or placements involving OJT subsidies, for which formal skills assessments were not viewed as necessary.

Second, most projects were unaware of the existence of tools that could be used to assess skills levels. Projects that tried to do formal assessments of skills often found that their tests were inadequate for the refugee population and therefore ceased using them. One project, for example, used a sophisticated battery of tests that it had used in assessing other populations. The agency found, however, that most of the tests were culture-specific or relied on extensive knowledge of English. These tests did not adequately assess their refugee clients who were mostly Southeast Asians with limited English capability. Therefore, the agency dropped its use of the tests during the course of the project.

Training

EST projects used a combination of classroom skills training and On-the-Job Training (OJT) approaches.

Classroom training was the only form of training available in only one site. This site trained and placed refugees as machinists, having considerable success until a shift in the labor market occurred and machinist job openings were no longer available. The training was conducted in a simulated employment setting within the agency's own offices. In its original proposal, the agency planned to negotiate work contracts with various manufacturing firms to allow the clients to spend a portion of time working on actual projects. However, these plans ran afoul of agreements with labor unions and were dropped. Later, this agency shifted the content of the classroom training, in response to shifting labor market conditions, from machinist training to electronics assembly training.

Classroom training was one of several forms of training available in four sites, which developed varying programs. In one site, the project purchased training slots from the JTPA program; these were generally short-term and low-cost, and covered a variety of occupational fields (word processing, electronics, auto mechanics, etc.). In a second site, training slots were purchased from an experienced operator of classroom vocational training programs for disadvantaged individuals, in such fields as jewelry manufacture, home appliance repair, upholstering, building maintenance and taxi driving. In a third project, training was offered in a single occupation -- farming. In a fourth site, training in food service and power sewing was purchased from a local community college and was geared specifically for project clients.

On-the-Job Training (OJT) served as the primary service strategy for six EST sites. OJT is characterized by a brief training period (2 weeks to six months) of initial employment when the employer receives a subsidy for part of the wages paid to the employee. The goal here was to provide the client with skills specific to a particular employer simultaneous with the beginning of paid employment at the job site. Some projects claimed placements as soon as the OJT contract was started, while others required the subsidy to end before the placement could be counted. In these sites, OJT was generally used to place clients in semi-skilled jobs that required particular knowledge. Some of these occupational areas included food services, machine shops, automotive repair, furniture manufacture, silverplating and electroplating.

The subsidies for OJT ranged from 33 percent to 50 percent of wages. (One site developed a variant of OJT that they called "try-out employment" that involved a 100% wage subsidy for two to four weeks.) The duration of the subsidies varied with the job type, with some continuing for as little as one to two months and others lasting as long as six months.

Most OJT placements were in small firms. A number of projects fully expected to place large groups of refugees with large manufacturing or other firms in their area. They found, however, that large firms were generally not interested in the OJT incentives. Such practices tended to create union problems, caused work slow-downs, and were sometimes perceived as "inconvenient" or too risky. Smaller firms, on the other hand, were more receptive. The OJT incentive made a difference to them and they appeared willing to make a commitment to hire refugees in response to the offered financial reward.

It is important to note that OJT indeed serves two interrelated purposes: 1) to increase the skills level of clients; and 2) to provide incentives to employers to hire refugees. In at least two sites, the latter was clearly the more important purpose. Most clients in these projects were placed in jobs in which other refugees were already working and for which few specialized skills were needed. Little if any training was provided on the job, other than informal assistance by other refugees. The projects saw value in OJT contracts, nevertheless, because it gives the employer an incentive to hire a particular client -- for example, an older refugee, or an individual with limited English. Once the employer realizes the value of the individual worker,the theory goes, the incentive will no longer be needed. In some cases, however, it appears that the decision by EST projects to target small employers was problematic, since some of the small employers were in financially precarious positions and may not be able to afford to continue to employ their new workers on a long term basis, after the subsidy ends.

The majority of sites, whether they relied on classroom training or OJT, provided some type of English language training to clients as part of a comprehensive service package. Of the eight sites with language training components, three offered vocational language training that was geared to the vocabulary and language needs of a specific occupation. The other five sites provided more general employment-related language training designed to help refugees communicate during their job search and on the job.

Job Placement

All projects developed a capacity to place refugees in employment, either as part of an OJT placement strategy, following classroom training, or as a primary service without reference to the provision of training. Placement services included the following elements, in various proportions: job development, job search assistance, coaching refugees for interviews and accompanying them to interviews and/or their first day(s) of employment, and follow-up assistance after placement. Since most of the projects were located in agencies that also provided other employment services to refugees, the projects were generally able to draw upon the broader resources of their parent agencies.

In more than half of the sites, a substantial portion of the placements made by the projects were unrelated to the provision of skills training. In three sites, the projects concentrated primarily on direct placement of clients into employment and did not refer a significant proportion of clients to training; all of these projects targeted older refugees. These projects worked with the clients to find them entry level (primarily minimum wage) jobs, and found that no OJT or classroom training was necessary to accomplish this goal in the labor market environments in which they were located. Contrary to the assumption that age was a barrier to employment that needed to be overcome by training, the problem was simply that many older refugees had never had access to employment services before. Targeting them as a group and providing regular job placement was all that was needed. In at least one site, the older refugees themselves were interested in immediate placement rather than even short-term training.

In two other projects, placements of clients without OJT contracts occurred because some employers were willing to hire refugees, but did not wish to utilize the OJT funds that were initially offered. The employers decided that the paperwork involved in participating in OJT outweighed whatever risks they faced in hiring untrained refugees.

In still other sites, placements were made that were not related to training because a portion of the refugees who entered classroom training programs were unable to complete them or did not gain sufficient skills by the end of the session to enter jobs in that field. Under these circumstances, projects still tried to place clients in jobs, often locating minimum wage employment that required few skills. The projects generally saw a value in the training experience even if clients did not enter a related job. In these cases, the training was understood to increase the clients' understanding of the world of work although it may not have succeeded in providing specific skills up to the employers' standards.

Support Services

Most of the EST projects offered support services to their clients through their overall refugee programs rather than through the EST project itself. For example, bilingual staff employed by the agencies social service projects and/or reception and placement grants were available for interpretation, translation, and counseling. One agency formed a consortium with a mutual assistance association and a local community college's language training program in order to expand resources available for support services.

The absence of specialized counseling and mental health services as part of a coordinated service package was noted as a problem at several sites. In one site in particular, clients showed difficulty retaining jobs, not because of a lack of skills but because of emotional problems impeding work adjustment. Whereas the project could readily place refugees after training, it found that a number of clients were not staying in jobs long enough to be counted as retained jobs in performance measures, as a result of emotional problems.

Special services such as day care were not a particular need for this client group, which was often single, male, and older (see section on client characteristics, above, for further information). Transportation was provided by seven of the 12 EST projects, often using project staff as a resource to transport clients to job interviews. We did not systematically collect data on the extent to which transportation was utilized, but project staff believed it to be an essential though usually informal part of their service package. At one site, the project director had convinced a local employer to run a shuttle bus to help refugees come to the plant, at the employer's expense. This service had operated for several weeks at the time of our visit, but it was about to be disbanded because of liability insurance costs.

CLIENT OUTCOMES

The discussion below will examine service enrollments, placements, wage rates, types of jobs, and retention for the EST projects. Most projects were still ongoing at the time outcome data were collected, so outcomes are not complete at this time. The extent of project completion will be indicated, as appropriate.

Enrollment of Clients

The EST projects varied greatly in the number of clients they planned to enroll in services, as well as in the number of refugees they expected to train. (All but one project anticipated that they would enroll some clients who would not receive training.) The expected number of enrollments ranged from a low of 29 to a high of 289, with planned numbers of trainees ranging from 29 to 100 clients.

Most of the EST projects appear to be on target in actually enrolling clients for services. Four projects have already exceeded their total planned enrollment for the entire life of the projects. Four projects are currently at or ahead of planned enrollment to date. The three remaining projects show underenrollment. One project appears to be underenrolling because it included all underemployed or unemployed refugees as well as new arrivals in its enrollment target, and it was not clear what percent of this pool the project actually intended to serve. A second was terminated ahead of schedule when a key staff member resigned, so enrollment was artificially cut off. The third experienced difficulties in reaching its enrollment goals because other agencies were not referring as many refugees as expected to the project. One project did not supply enrollment data.

While all the EST projects planned to offer some form of training, either OJT or classroom training, not all projects specified the planned number of trainees in their proposals. During the site visits, it was discovered that many projects found it hard to fill training slots, in part because direct placement of refugees in jobs was considered preferable by clients, project staff, or both. In addition, it proved harder than anticipated to place clients into training slots in mainstream training institutions. None of the projects has trained more clients than it projected originally, and it is unlikely that any will. One project had placed no clients in training, although it had placed refugees in jobs. Thus, most EST projects did not meet the ORR requirement that refugee skills deficits be overcome through training.

Placements

It is difficult to draw any conclusions about placement data, since placements may not occur uniformly over the life of a project, especially where training classes are in progress. Given that fact and the slow startup most projects experienced, it is not surprising that the majority have achieved fewer placements than their timetables call for. It is too early to tell whether the placement goals established by the projects were unrealistic; with the exception of the one site where no more placements will be happening, it seems plausible that most EST projects will meet their numerical goals or come close.

It should be noted, however, that placements achieved by the EST projects are not necessarily due to training. None of the projects kept data separately on placements related to or subsequent to training versus direct placements.

Wage Rates and Job Characteristics

Wage Rates

The majority of the EST projects placed refugees into jobs with wage rates of $4.50 per hour or below. Five projects, however, did have at least 10% of their placements in jobs paying $4.51 to $6.00 per hour as shown in Figure III-7. A number of observations can be made about these rates. There were no common criteria or standards for wage rates developed by projects or by ORR, aside from the requirement that the earnings lead to a decrease in cash assistance utilization. The wage rate needed to remove a large household from public assistance is higher than that needed to remove a small household, and the necessary wage rate is higher in a high-benefit state as well. The variance in wage rates among projects was quite wide, and was not correlated with benefit levels. In some projects, direct placements were almost always in or near the minimum wage category, while in others, placements were accepted only if the wage was "high enough" or if employee benefits were attached to the position. While it is notable that at least half of all placements were at wage levels above $3.65/hr. in seven of eight projects providing these data, most projects provided no information about the resulting decrease in cash assistance utilization by their clients. The earnings probably removed single persons and some small families from public aid, but would not be sufficient to remove a large family in a high-benefit state. The wage rates achieved by refugees in EST programs appeared to be well within the national average for refugee wage rates. The ORR Self-Sufficiency study, for example, found that the mean wage for employed refugees was $5.01 an hour.[1]

Job Retention

It proved very difficult to obtain 90-day retention figures from the projects. In many cases, the concept was simply unclear and it was nearly impossible to explain to project directors what we were

Figure III-7

Hourly Wage Rates Obtained by EST Project Clients[a]

	With 50% or More Placements Over $3.65	With 50% or More Placements Over $4.50	With at Least 20% Placements Over $4.50	With at Least 10% Placements Over $4.50	Data Not Available
No. of Projects	7	1	2	5	3

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[a] Only 11 different projects are included here since both projects in New Jersey were combined for these computations. These categories are not mutually exclusive.

interested in.* In addition, different projects computed retention in different ways. Therefore, in most cases, the retention figures must be interpreted cautiously.

Retention was high at only one of the projects, where the director worked very hard to match refugees and jobs and fully expected a 100% 90-day retention rate. In another site, the director also tried to match refugees and jobs and was disappointed at problems with retention. These problems, it seemed, stemmed from the fact that the clients served were a problematic group with many mental health and other problems which were not being addressed. The project with the lowest retention rate mostly placed clients in short-term service jobs (such as yard work); in this state, a placement could be counted from the very first day that a client went to work. In another state, by contrast, a job could not be counted as a placement unless it lasted 30 days. The project's means of computing placements, therefore, could and did affect the incentive to secure stable employment for clients.

Job Types

The types of jobs found by refugees generally fell into the broad categories of manufacturing or service jobs, with some clerical and miscellaneous categories, as shown in Figure III-8. Electronics assembly and power sewing were popular manufacturing jobs (and were occupations targeted by skills training curricula), as was general factory work in other areas. The preponderance of manufacturing jobs in some projects undoubtedly accounts for relatively higher wage rates, since these jobs tend to be better paid. Some programs targeted technical positions such as auto mechanic, metal finishing and

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*Our requests to project directors were complicated by the fact that not all their terminees had been placed at least 90 days at the time we wanted to collect our data. Thus, staff had to not only provide us with accurate counts of the absolute number of terminees who had retained jobs for 90 days but also accurate counts of the absolute number of terminees who had been placed at least 90 days previously. The ratio of these two numbers was the statistic we wanted to compute: i.e., the percentage of all terminees placed into jobs at least 90 days previously who had retained those jobs for 90 days or more.

Figure III-8

Types of Jobs Obtained Through EST Projects

Type of Job	Number of Projects Reporting This Type of Job	Highest Proportion of Project Participants Placed in This Type of Job
Manufacturing	6	80%
Service	7	43%
Sewing	2	20%
Clerical	2	15%
Technical	2	NA
Professional	1	4%
Assembly	1	NA

NA = Data not available

engraving. Service jobs frequently included housekeeping and food service positions.

These jobs correspond closely to those refugees generally obtain. The ORR Self-Sufficiency study, for example, also found the majority of refugees to be employed in service and operative or manufacturing jobs (23.9% and 40% respectively), with a smaller number in clerical and sales positions (9.3% and 2%).[2] A 1984 study by Robert Bach on labor force participation and employment of Southeast Asian refugees gave similar figures: 21.9% as service workers, 40.7% in production and manufacturing, and 24.4% in clerical and sales.[3]

Overall Project Costs

Although an examination of the total funds available to EST projects is not very revealing, it is important to look at costs per planned enrollment and placement. Even though actual enrollment and placement costs cannot be computed because projects are not yet complete, the planned costs can at least give an idea of intended cost outcomes.

Costs per planned enrollment varied from a low of about $500-600 to a high of about $2,200. The lowest figure is artificially deflated because the project defined its intended enrollment as all unemployed or underemployed refugees in the community. However, three other projects also intended to spend less than $1,000 per enrollee. At the other end of the scale, two projects had a cost per planned enrollment of more than $2,000, and in one of these cases, the costs exceeded $4,000 when non-ORR funds are included. Given that none of the projects proposed extensive training programs or elaborate service packages, it is hard to explain why there is such a wide disparity between the highest and lowest costs.

More revealing are the costs per planned placement. True costs per placement may, of course, either exceed or fall short of these planned costs, depending on whether the projects ultimately exceed or fall short of their projected number of placements. The site with the lowest cost per planned placement had a cost of $1,172. However, that particular project has been terminated earlier than expected and its actual cost per placement, $1,533, will be much closer to the next three lowest projects, where the planned cost per placement totalled $1,563, $1,587 and $1,630. Four other projects planned to spend about $2,500 per placement. The projects with the highest costs per planned placement, not surprisingly, turned out to be those with the highest cost per planned enrollment ($3,301 and $3,304).

These costs per placement are similar to the cost reported for the FY83 Targeted Assistance Program of $3,025, which is not surprising, given that the EST projects mostly offered services similar to those projects. Very few projects made any effort to calculate welfare grant reduction; indeed, a number of projects reported that few of their clients were on welfare at program entry. States with high welfare benefits would recoup costs per placement very quickly; low benefit states, however, would take a longer time to balance the money spent on placement. Only one state made it an explicit policy that the OJT subsidy could not exceed the client's welfare grant; in many cases, the subsidy was far less, and welfare savings were achieved. In addition, other measures of cost savings that are not easily calculated, such as decreasing secondary migration and increased job mobility, may well have been the result of EST projects, even if they cannot be measured.

Effect of Labor Market Factors

The overall economic situation in the localities in which EST projects were implemented affected both strategies and outcomes. When the EST program was conceived, the nation was just coming out of an economic recession that had had a dampening effect on the capacity of refugees to find and retain employment. By the time the EST projects were implemented, however, the labor market had improved in many of the EST sites, particularly for service and some manufacturing jobs. Projects faced a dilemma. They could place refugees in minimum wage jobs without providing skills training. Although these jobs did not help the projects meet the goals of the EST program -- to place refugees in stable jobs that provided sufficient earnings to remove households from cash assistance -- they did meet the overall goal of the resettlement program -- early employment. Moreover, many projects found that the refugees they enrolled in services were unlikely to benefit appreciably from training. They were hard-to-place in skilled jobs because they lacked English and did not have the work background that would enable them to pick up new skills in a short training course. The projects thus made an assessment that direct placement was preferable to training if the training would not result in better employment opportunities.

Effect of the Welfare Context

Three of the twelve projects took place within areas of relatively high welfare benefits and substantial welfare utilization by refugees. In these cases, enhanced skills training proved to be a problematic strategy for removing households from cash assistance. Many of the households on cash assistance were large families, and it was clear that for a one-person income to bring the family unit out of public assistance, it would have to be very high. In most cases, however, the wages received as a result of enhanced skills placements rarely reached even $6.00 per hour. Nor did project staff believe that placements at high wages were possible, even with substantial training.

Even in areas of low welfare utilization, the enhanced skills strategy could be problematic. Where there were low benefit levels, employment at minimum wage could often exceed the cash assistance payment. Refugees could seldom support themselves by remaining on public assistance during a training program unless they received a training subsidy that was greater than their welfare payment. In many of these sites, the refugees themselves urged staff to do direct placements rather than enroll the refugees in training programs.

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

While, in most cases, projects did not accurately incorporate the ORR objectives into the implemented service designs and client recruitment practices, there were exceptions. Several projects did conduct labor market analyses and chose training slots that were in accordance with the needs of employers and consistent with the employment needs of refugees. Even here, however, the projects met with only partial success. For example, one project aimed at increasing the capacity of its clients to stay in jobs through specialized classroom training and OJT. This project established strong links with JTPA as a way of increasing the training opportunities available to refugees. This was accomplished both through a JTPA contract to serve refugees in one county and through hiring as the project job developer an individual who had formerly worked for the JTPA program. The project's job developer was aware that many short-term specialized training programs developed by JTPA contained unfilled slots and approached JTPA to purchase these slots for refugees. JTPA liked the idea, and because the courses are short-term and inexpensive ($400 or less), they proved to be useful to the EST project as well. Project administrators found, however, that emotional problems were as important as lack of skills in creating difficulties for refugees in retaining jobs. In fact, many of the enrolled clients had skills and previous education that made them more than qualified for the jobs that were available through the project, yet they had difficulty staying employed.

A second project trained refugees to take jobs as machinists -- an occupation that had employed a large portion of the already working refugee population. Unexpectedly, the economic situation changed and jobs in this field were no longer available mid-way through one of the training cycles. The project also found that there were fewer refugees who would benefit from the training than originally anticipated. It had no trouble finding training-related jobs for the first two cycles of trainees, who were carefully screened to determine their aptitude for the occupation, but found it very difficult to place refugees trained during the third cycle. Later, this project shifted its training curriculm to offer electronics assembly training, because of the limited job market for machinists. However, the results of this new training strategy are not yet available.

As an effort to increase the opportunities for refugees to obtain stable employment and increased earnings, the Enhanced Skills Training projects show mixed results. There are several measures of performance: placements, retentions, and earnings. As far as placement rates are concerned, most of the projects appear to be meeting their job placement goals. Job retention information was generally not available from the projects in a way that is useful for evaluation purposes. Performance on earnings is not particularly impressive. For the most part, these projects have not placed refugees in jobs with higher earnings than those normally found by refugees.

Even if the data were complete, it would be difficult to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of these projects in meeting the objectives of the Enhanced Skills Training program. Many of the job placements reported by the projects are unrelated to training, so it is difficult to conclude that enhanced skills training has led to improved placement rates. Similarly, no conclusions can be reached about the effect of training on earnings since few projects used training to enhance skills and therefore prepare refugees for higher paying work. Thus, EST grants demonstrated a modest success as a strategy to encourage employment of refugees having difficulty obtaining employment, but it did little to test the impact of enhanced skills training on the capacity of refugees to find and hold jobs with increased earnings potential.

CHAPTER III NOTES

[1] Institute of Social Research, University of Michigan, Southeast Asian Refugee Self-Sufficiency Study, Final Report, January, 1983, p. 133.

[2] Self-Sufficiency Study, p. 123.

[3] Bach, "Labor Force Participation and Employment of Southeast Asian Refugees in the United States," August 1984, pp. 80-81.

IV. ASSESSMENT OF THE MULTIPLE WAGE EARNER PROJECTS

As described previously, the Multiple Wage Earner program had three major objectives:

- to recruit unemployed "secondary wage earners" from households with more than one potential wage earner;
- to identify and address barriers to the employment of more than one individual from the household; and
- to assist participants to obtain jobs that increase the total household earnings.

This chapter discusses the twelve Multiple Wage Earner (MWE) projects briefly described in Chapter II. It describes the organizations that operated the projects, the characteristics of the clients served under the demonstration funding, the services provided by the projects, the outcomes achieved, the costs associated with those outcomes, the environmental contexts in which the projects operated, and the lessons to be learned from the experiences of the funded projects. The chapter begins with an overview of our major findings.

OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

MWE projects were largely successful in placing underserved individuals in entry-level (minimum wage) jobs. However, because the projects did not usually target or track an entire household, it is impossible to document MWE outcomes in terms of achieving multiple wage earner objectives (i.e., in terms of increasing total household earnings to the point where household self-sufficiency is increased). Some of the factors that appeared to contribute to MWE projects' employment successes included:

- targeting specific industries and occupations of interest to refugees;
- designing short-term (one to two month) training based on a detailed understanding of the performance expectations of specific employers; and

- building vocationally-oriented English language training into the skills training curriculum to impart vocabulary and communication skills essential for job success.

MWE projects also pursued opportunities for women to earn money for work performed in the home, through piecework for an employer or self-employment in crafts, sewing, or child care. While this strategy had more limited success in increasing self-sufficiency, it was an important first step for women who were reluctant to work outside the home.

Contrary to expectations, the primary service strategy implemented by many MWE projects was short-term classroom skills training followed by job placement. While skills training is not essential to the strategy of increasing the number of household wage earners, it can be very useful in preparing participants who lack previous work experience to meet the expectations of American employers. Enriched supportive services and counseling services were not used to the degree anticipated by the original project design. Ironically, skills training approaches were used more frequently and with greater success than in the EST projects, because they were carefully designed to serve the needs of both participants and employers.

Despite their success at designing effective programs, MWE projects experienced some of the same implementation problems observed in the EST sites. Individualized screening, assessment and service planning procedures were often absent. The MWE projects were often organizationally isolated from other refugee service providers, weakening their ability to coordinate with and draw on the resources of other organizations. This organizational isolation led them to define eligibility criteria too narrowly, excluding unemployed "primary wage earners" who could have made essential contributions to household self-sufficiency.

In general, the MWE projects confirm the potential for effective skills training and placement activity, but failed to demonstrate the potential for multiple wage earners to help lift households into self-sufficiency. This was because program activity and outcome data were often not directed at the household as a whole. As later sections of this report discuss, this finding points to the need for a household orientation throughout the refugee program rather than a specialized approach aimed at secondary wage earners.

PROJECT PLANNING AND ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING PROJECTS

The planning of the twelve MWE projects varied across the five states. Within the two states that funded multiple projects, the types of organizations selected to operate the projects also varied. Figure IV-1 summarizes these variations.

- In half the cases (located in four of the five states), local service providers or MAAs planned the projects and operated them, and the state provided administrative and fiscal oversight.
- In the other half of the cases (all but one of which were located in one state), the state took the lead in planning the projects, but consulted with representatives of service providers and MAAs. Then the MAAs operated the projects, as least initially. (In two cases, the MAAs had administrative difficulties that were serious enough to cause the states involved to transfer project management to more experienced agencies.)
- All but two of the projects were operated by organizations that did not have ORR formula-funded employment service contracts. These organizations usually had experience providing employment or supportive services to refugees under special funding, such as Critical Unmet Needs or Highland Lao Initiative funds, but the primary refugee employment services in their cities were provided by other agencies.
- In two cases where the MWE agency provided formula-funded employment services, only one offered a full service package from assessment to placement. In fact, that project was run by a four-agency consortium so that all refugee services, including reception and placement, ESL, training, and job development and placement were already

Figure IV-1

Organizations Operating MWE Projects

Description	No. of Sites
Project designed and operated by:	
• MAA or MAA consortium	2
• consortium of service providers	2
• community-based organization serving refugees	1
• VOLAG	1
Project designed by state (in consultation with representatives of service providers and/or MAAs), but operated by:	
• MAA	3
• community action agency	1
• MAA initially, then management was turned over to a more experienced agency	2

Availability of Bilingual Staff in MWE Projects

Description	No. of Sites
Project staff included bilingual workers from ethnic backgrounds similar to clientele	10
Bilingual staff were only available to the project through other sources	2

available; the MWE project became one option in this service system that served all the refugee families in that city.

Staffing

Figure IV-1 indicates that all but two projects had bilingual staff who were paid for at least in part by the MWE grant. In the other cases, bilingual staff paid for by other programs were available to assist project staff.

The median number of bilingual staff was two persons, and as one would expect, their ethnicity tended to match that of project clients.

Bilingual staff filled a variety of roles, including outreach, job development, counseling, interpreting, and training assistance. However, it appeared that relatively few of these positions were filled by female bilingual staff who might have served as excellent role models for project clientele. One site reported that recruitment was much easier after they were finally able to hire a part-time Hmong woman, who left her children with a babysitter while she did outreach for the project.

Project directors typically served part time. One of the bilingual project directors also recruited project participants.

CLIENT CHARACTERISTICS

The MWE projects were different from "business as usual" in the regular ORR-funded social services system because they had a mandate to target households with a particular characteristic: the presence of more than one potential wage earner. This was in contrast to the EST projects, where new or expanded service provision was to be the main distinguishing feature. As was discussed above, the projects were largely operated by organizations outside of the ongoing employment system. The MWE projects were thus faced with the task of recruiting a new kind of client, either in conjunction with other employment providers or on their own, who fit a "secondary wage earner" definition.

Since primary wage earners are often male heads of households, a number of projects defined their target populations as women and youth, usually in large families on public assistance. (See Figure IV-2). Eight projects listed women as their first target group. No project targeted youth as their first priority, although one project developed a short-term training course in cash register operation especially for youth.

A few projects set strict eligibility criteria and then targeted within the eligible pool: two projects required that at least one family member already be employed, and two projects required that the family be on public assistance or have an income below the poverty line to be eligible. All projects targeted households on cash assistance or with marginal incomes, even if it was not a strict eligibility criterion.

Most projects relied on word of mouth and community outreach via flyers, newsletters, or personal contact to recruit clients. Since a majority of MWE projects were run by MAAs or MAA consortia who kept in fairly close touch with their membership, this strategy seemed quite productive. However, it has implications for the ethnic group distribution of the clients: an MAA tends to know its own ethnic group best and may find it hard to recruit from other ethnic groups. (This is not a problem if the target group is only one ethnicity.) Therefore, the strategy of awarding contracts to multi-MAA consortia or agencies with bilingual staff from a number of ethnicities appeared to be better choices if the target client group was ethnically mixed.

Most projects received referrals from welfare offices and other refugee service providers. One non-MAA project examined welfare printouts to identify families where one family member was working and another adult was in the household. If these adults had an Employment Development Plan (EDP) on file, they were called in and counseled, and if appropriate were encouraged to participate. Because this project was conducted by resettlement agencies that also had ongoing employment programs, nearly all newly-arriving families would be counseled at once about the advantages of having more than one wage earner. Once at least

Figure IV-2

Eligibility and Targeting Criteria of MWE Projects

# of Projects	Eligibility Criteria	Priority Target Groups
2	One household member employed.	1. Women with no work experience; other SWE on cash assistance; other SWE who are laid off or in danger of secondary migration. 2. On cash assistance, with priority to those in U.S. more than in U.S. more than 36 months.
2	On cash assistance or income below poverty level.	Adult SWE; youth (16-21); elderly (over 45).
5		Women, youth, and elderly in cash assistance households with more than one potential wage earner.
2		Homebound women with limited English; other SWE.
1		Adults in welfare-dependent households, including homebound women with children; over 45; other SWE; subsistence-level wage earners.

SWE = secondary wage earner

one family member was employed through the regular program, others could be trained or directly placed through the MWE project.

Given the above targeting criteria, it is not surprising that a majority of the projects for which information was collected had an enrolled client population that was at least 50% female. (See Figure IV-3). Young or elderly secondary wage earners could have been either male or female, and some projects served male primary wage earners as well as female secondary wage earners, as long as at least one family member (e.g., uncle) was employed. Either of these strategies would result in males (and in some cases, heads of households) being served within the MWE definition.

Two projects, however, served a considerable number of single refugees, who were most often single males. These projects seemed to have so expanded their view of the purpose of the grant that they served all refugees who desired help, whether or not they met the definition of a secondary wage earner. One of these same projects has a modal family size of two, whereas all the other projects mostly served families with at least three members, and at least two projects served very large families. (Since several of the projects for which data on family size are unavailable served mostly Hmong clients, it is likely that a majority of the projects served large families containing at least five members.)

Other client characteristics are summarized in Figure IV-4. Only one project's client population was not dominated by Southeast Asians; 10 projects had 75% or more clients from Southeast Asia, and of these, seven projects served mostly Hmong clients. At least eight projects, including all the Hmong projects, had a majority of clients who had been in the U.S. more than 36 months.

While all the projects targeted families on cash assistance, by no means all of the clients were receiving a grant at the time of entry to the projects; the range was from 28% to 100%. There are several reasons why project clients might not be on cash assistance. The first is that many projects searched for clients in families where one person was already working. Since in many low-benefit states, one wage earner is sufficient to close a grant (except in the case of the largest

Figure IV-3

Characteristics of MWE Clients: Sex, Family Position, Family Size

Sex

	50% or more female	25-50% female	Information not available
# of projects	6	3	3

Family Position

	50% or more spouse or non-head of household	Less than 50% spouse or non-head of household	Information not available
# of projects	5 (Range of head of household: 6% - 37%)	1 - 25% single, 45% head of household. 1 - 30% single, 21% head of household.	5

Modal Family Size

	Modal family size - 2 or less	Modal family size - 3-4	Modal family size - 5 or more	Information not available
# of projects	1	4	2	5

Figure IV-4

Characteristics of MWE Clients: Ethnicity, Length of Time in U.S., Welfare Status

	75% or more clients Southeast Asian	Less than 50% of clients Southeast Asian	Information not available
# of projects	10	1	1

	50% or more clients in U.S. 36 months or longer	50% or more clients in U.S. less than 1 year	Client pool not dominated by short- or long-term residents	Information not available
# of projects	8	1	2	1 (This project gave priority to time-expired refugees)

	60-100% of clients receiving cash grant at entry	40-60% of clients receiving cash grant at entry	Less than 40% of clients receiving cash grant	Information not available
# of projects	6	3	1 - 28% 1 - 31%	1

families) many clients recruited for the MWE projects may not have been on cash assistance. The primary wage earner may make enough to make the family ineligible for cash assistance but not enough to lift the family above the poverty level. The other probable reason for the low percent of clients on cash assistance is that the clients served by the projects were time-expired refugees who were not eligible for AFDC-U. In four of the five states where the projects operated, either the state strictly interpreted the previous work history requirements so that most refugee families were not eligible, or no AFDC-U program existed.

The descriptive statistics hide a complex story about how projects perceived the purpose of the MWE grants. During site visits, the projects were universally referred to as "Secondary Wage Earner," not "Multiple Wage Earner," grants. The projects had operationalized the concept of "increasing the number of household wage earners" by targeting traditional secondary wage earners: women and youth in households where a male head of household was employed. This was a promising strategy, since the male heads of households were supposedly being served in regular programs. However, things were more complicated in operation. In one of the states, where five of the projects were located, most of the heads of household were not employed; in addition, this state's refugee population is largely Hmong, so that very traditional attitudes about who should be the family breadwinner prevail. These heads of household were often reluctant to allow their wives to participate in employment projects, even though it was rational from the perspective of increasing family income while preserving welfare eligibility. In this environment, serving all members of the household tended to defuse family tensions about traditional roles. However, placing primary wage earners in jobs where they worked more than 100 hours a month triggered welfare cut-offs, so many part-time placements for primary wage earners were arranged as a compromise. A similar problem was encountered in one project in another state that offered a more elaborate training program to secondary wage earners than was available to primary wage earners through other refugee services. Here too, serving primary wage earners helped gain legitimacy for the project in the refugee community.

Another reason why heads of households were more prevalent than expected is that many of the clients were time-expired refugees who had low priority in other programs. In all but three of the projects, the client pool was, by design or by chance, dominated by clients who had been in the U.S. for more than 36 months. Thus, in addition to the envisioned client population of secondary wage earners in households where the primary wage earner had been placed by regular service programs, these projects also attracted those very primary wage earners, many of whom had previously worked but were dissatisfied with or had lost their jobs.

Only two projects reported no problems with the definition of the client group. One was a project that simply enlarged the definition to include almost any refugee. The other was the only project where Southeast Asian clients were not in the majority. In this project, the clients included many Eastern European and Ethiopian families where multiple wage earners were accepted in the refugees' home culture. In addition, this project was only one part of a full range of resettlement and employment services available through the parent agency so that other family members could be legitimately served under the same roof; none of the other MWE projects had this advantage. It also served many new arrivals, so that the whole household's needs could be considered at once, rather than needing to convince families who had already established patterns of living that they should change their ways.

Several projects moved from the strictly operational "secondary wage earner" definition to a multiple wage earner concept in order to justify their service provision to primary wage earners, and in order to deal with the needs of entire households as a service unit. However, the move was viewed by ORR, by states, and by the projects themselves, as governed by necessity, rather than as a rediscovery of the concept underlying the grant announcement. The lack of congruence between the ORR objective of increasing the number of household wage earners and the projects' strict definition of the target population was probably exacerbated by the fact that the organizations running the projects were outside of the mainstream refugee employment system. This fact meant that the projects had to avoid impinging on that ongoing system's "turf." If projects had embraced households (rather than individual secondary wage earners) as their identified clients from the start, then they would have had considerable overlap with regular providers. By sticking to a narrower definition, the projects had a well-defined population that could be viewed as distinct from that of the mainstream system.

The task of convincing male heads of households that it was acceptable for their wives to work outside the home was an acknowledged problem in most of the projects. Here, the separation of the project from the regular set of services was an advantage, since the MAA or MAA consortium that usually ran the MWE project was viewed as best suited to assist in this aspect of cultural orientation. However, many project staff mentioned that they believed that the year-long demonstration contracts would succeed in reaching those wives most ready to go to work, and that moving beyond that initial group in subsequent years would be very difficult indeed. Thus, if a strict secondary wage earner definition were continued it would probably prove harder and harder to recruit clients over time. The concluding section of this chapter will discuss the issue of how to further a multiple wage earner objective through other means than targeting secondary wage earners.

SERVICES

Figure IV-5 offers an overview of the range of services that MWE projects provided, and indicates examples of the activities that were included in each major category of service. No project offered every service, and the activities that characterized major categories of service varied considerably across sites. For example, some sites emphasized direct placement, in contrast to training followed by placement. Some sites offered free child care during the training period, while others only offered help finding child care.

Below, the services offered under each major category are described, and the effectiveness of each of the various strategies is assessed.

Figure IV-5

Overview of Services Provided by MWE Projects

Category	Activities That Might Be Included
Pre-Employment Assessment and Orientation	• Assessment of skills, including English language ability • Assessment of employment preferences and transferrable skills • Job search techniques • Orientation to the work place and/or community • Job clubs for peer support while searching for work
Training in Vocational Skills	• Classroom training, in which a teacher or trainer imparts specific vocational skills, such as electronic assembly or power sewing • On-the-Job Training (OJT) at the work site, with wages subsidized for a brief period under contract with the employer • "Customized training" (training in vocational skills that are required to perform a specific job for a specific employer) • Supported Employment in a variety of jobs at a single worksite • Unpaid Work Experience, at a work site where the employer makes a commitment to hire at the end of the training period
Training in Language Skills	• English as a second language (ESL) • Vocational English language training (VELT or VESL)
Job Development	• Proactive outreach to employers to persuade them to consider hiring refugees

Figure IV-5 (continued)

Category	Activities That Might Be Included
Placement and Follow-up	• Placement after training (as contrasted with "direct placement" below) • Direct placement, without providing formal training (see definitions of classroom, customized, and OJT training activities above) • Job search assistance, in which project staff help refugees identify employment opportunities and accompany them to interviews • Counseling and support, e.g., encouraging refugees to stay on the job • Negotiation, e.g., working through problems that arise with both employers and refugees • Interpretation, e.g., translating as needed during interviews and/or for the first few days on the job • Verifying at specified intervals the numbers of refugees, officially placed by the project, who have retained these jobs
Supportive Services	• Child care, transportation, driver education • Referral to other sources for whatever services are not available through the project

Pre-Employment Assessment and Orientation

Figure IV-6 shows that all MWE projects included pre-employment assessment, usually conducted individually at the time of intake or soon thereafter, in their package of services. In addition, a majority of the projects offered individual or group orientation services in how to find and keep a job, as well as other survival skills. As the examples in the table suggest, each of these service areas consisted of a cluster of services. The particular mix varied according to the local situation.

The most notable finding in this area was that the "employability assessment," more often than not, did not utilize skills tests or other tools to augment interviewers' subjective judgements. One project developed a simple mathematics screening test to assess whether clients were suitable for electronics assembly training. For the most part, project staff or staff at other employment service providers interviewed the refugees and formed judgements about their vocational skills, language fluency, employment preferences, training needs, and overall employability. Project staff made an effort to match client capabilities and preferences to training and employment opportunities as accurately as possible, even without the use of bilingual assessment instruments.

The lack of assessment tools, while troubling, was not so serious for MWE projects as for EST projects. The latter could expect to serve clients with a wide variety of characteristics and work experience. The MWE projects, on the other hand, mostly targeted women and youth whose main identifying characteristic was a lack of U.S. work experience; these clients needed marketable skills, a sense of self-confidence, and help finding that all-important first job. Because the training strategies developed by the projects used actual machines from targeted industries, a client's aptitude could be assessed rather quickly after training began. Projects that did not offer training used counseling to boost self-confidence and to support clients during initial weeks on entry-level jobs that did not require extensive skills.

Figure IV-6

Pre-employment Assessment and Orientation in MWE Projects

Component/Activity	No. of Sites
• Pre-employment Assessment Examples: assessment of skills, English fluency, employment preferences, and needs for child care or other supportive services	12
• Orientation Examples: job search techniques, job clubs for sharing experiences, worksite behavior, interviewing skills, survival skills for daily living, cultural expectations	7

Training in Vocational Skills

Even when MWE projects used direct placement as their primary service approach, they realized that at least some percentage of their clients could benefit from short-term training opportunities geared to specific jobs. Figure IV-7 summarizes the features of the vocational skills training offered by MWE projects. Among the major findings are:

- Only 1 of the 12 MWE projects did not make some provision for training project clients; that project had a contract to do direct placement only in conjunction with another project that was providing training.
- Of the 11 projects offering some sort of training, 9 emphasized classroom or on-site training prior to placement, with the majority of these (5) operating their own classroom training.
- This classroom training fit well with available employment opportunities.
- At only 3 sites did employers train some or all project clients.

Occupational Skills Training. The most popular strategy -- classroom training prior to employment -- was implemented in similar ways across MWE projects. Classes were usually limited to small groups of refugees (5-10) and often used bilingual paraprofessionals to assist the trainers in explaining techniques and for monitoring client practice. In many cases, potential employers donated expensive equipment for the classes, such as cash registers, power sewing machines, and parts for the electronics assembly classes.

For example, at one site, classroom training in a competency-based power sewing course and demonstration of mastery of these competencies were provided in preparation for placement at a large clothing manufacturing plant. The objective of the course was to prepare refugees to meet tough piece-work standards at that particular plant and to pass the company's compulsory training course. The plant donated several power sewing machines for use in the project's 70-hour class (five weeks, four days a week, three hours a day). Only five or six refugees were taught

Figure IV-7

Features of Training in MWE Projects

	No. of Projects
Provided classroom or on-site training prior to placement in labor market	9
Of these:	
• Project developed classroom training tailored to match available jobs (power sewing, electronics assembly, cash register operation)	5
• Project referred clients to existing classroom training opportunities (variety of fields, including power sewing and housekeeping)	2
• Project arranged with employers to provide on-site training, either paid or unpaid (variety of small employers as well as one supported employment worksite)	3
Provided training to prepare clients for opportunities to supplement household income by working at home	6
Of these:	
• Project provided day care certification training	4
• Project provided home sewing training	1
• Project provided customized training for handicraft piecework	1

Note: Several projects offered more than one kind of training, therefore numbers do not add to 12.

at one time. Small class size and assistance from a bilingual aide made it possible to individualize instruction and monitor practice closely. The Personnel Director at this plant credited the MWE project trainer with virtually ensuring that every refugee placed at the plant was ultimately retained.

The duration of most training was from one to two months, with most of the power sewing courses being competency-based so that clients proceeded at their own pace; the cashier and electronics assembly courses kept to a fixed class schedule. One project further refined the competency notion by separating clients into two power sewing courses: one for clients from technologically-based societies or who had familiarity with machines and urban life, and one for clients from non-technologically-based societies or who had lived exclusively in rural areas. The former were provided with traditional classroom training. The latter group was placed in a specialized training course where an "audio-motor" approach was used: this meant that the trainers used only a limited, standardized vocabulary, and that clients would learn vocabulary by actually holding or pointing to an item while saying its name, or would learn appropriate responses to commands by actually performing the action, rather than being told what it meant. This approach ensured that even the clients who had never operated any kind of machine before could successfully advance through the training course and be placed in jobs fairly soon after arrival.

The group nature of the classroom training was important for two reasons. First, even in competency-based, open-entry/open-exit courses, the clients could offer each other support and encouragement. Because many projet clients were homebound women, the presence of others who were undergoing new experiences was very important. Second, projects that offered group classroom training were located near industries where groups of refugees could be placed in the same site after training; again, the mutual encouragement on the work site was viewed as crucial. Several staff members commented that for homebound women especially, the easiest way to ensure failure was to make a placement where the woman was the only refugee present.

The advantages of the kinds of classroom training offered by the projects were several:

- they were in fields that required little English language competency on the job, once basic vocabularies and work flow coding instructions were mastered;
- they were in fields in which both female and male refugees wanted employment, either because productivity bonus systems allowed them to make a good wage in a short period of time (power sewing), or because employers in the field had good benefit programs and had hired refugees (electronics assembly);
- they were in fields where large numbers of refugees could be placed with the same employer for ongoing mutual support; and
- compared to many classroom training courses offered by mainstream providers (e.g., JTPA) where courses can last six to nine months, the courses were short enough to be inexpensive and to offer refugees quick access to the job market.

Some disadvantages of the classroom training approach are:

- jobs may require more skills with numbers than many refugees possess (e.g., for cash register operation or electronics assembly), and projects had fewer math tutors or classes available for their clients than English tutors or classes;
- the market for some jobs is not predictable: the electronics industry is especially volatile, and some power sewing companies threaten to move overseas or automate; and
- unless a large plant or a number of plants exist in a locality, there may not be enough jobs available for graduates from a particular group training course.

On the whole, short-term classroom training designed for the specific needs of women or youth and targeted for a specific industry or plant proved a highly successful strategy for the five MWE projects that developed this kind of training. It is not clear whether the two projects that referred clients to already-existing classroom training were as successful. However, the latter strategy would make sense where clients had fairly high English language proficiency (so that the presence of bilingual assistants was not crucial) and/or prior work experience (so that the social support aspect of a special training program was not needed).

Another training approach -- employer-provided training -- was used successfully by three projects, but the implementation varied greatly. One project wrote traditional OJT contracts with a number of small employers, a strategy that works well if clients are already familiar with American work habits and need a period of subsidized wages in order to become as productive as other workers. Another project wrote contracts with a variety of local employers to provide training in particular jobs skills to refugees who would work on-site for one or two weeks without pay. This strategy is similar to traditional work experience, except that the employer made a commitment to hire the refugee at the end of the training period. This strategy is useful if clients are receiving cash assistance and can thus support themselves without a wage during the training period. However, it is not clear that all employers would be comfortable with the notion of having unpaid "employees" on the job site.

The third training approach was used by a service organization that adapted the techniques used with disabled trainees and applied them to refugees. A work site was established at the project facility to perform a number of subcontracts: sorting nuts and bolts, sorting cloth, upholstery, and preparing meals for the elderly. The project operator then trained refugees to perform these tasks and paid them for their performance (while offering supportive services such as child care and English classes). Refugees were expected to work in this supported environment until they could be placed in jobs in the community, although it was not expected that the skills learned in "training" would necessarily be directly transferable to other jobs. Rather, the approach was seen as general training in American worksite experiences, which allowed refugees to earn money and to develop confidence. In fact, the clients have tended to remain for an extended period at the supported worksite, where their productivity levels are highly valued. However, this means that the number of clients "trained" has been much lower than expected.

On the whole, the employer-provided training approach was not so well developed at the MWE projects as the classroom training approach. An advantage of the former approach is that it is suitable for small communities or communities where no one industry can be targeted for classroom training of large numbers of refugees. A disadvantage of the approach is that it usually does not involve the kind of supportive atmosphere that can be achieved in classroom training.

A final training strategy utilized by a number of MWE projects was training for work performed at home. In order to improve opportunities for women who have child rearing responsibilities, are elderly, or are otherwise not ready to seek employment outside the home, several projects offered training in jobs that could be done, often on a part-time basis, in the home. These included: day care certification training, home sewing training, and customized training for handicraft piecework.

Four of the five projects in one state offered 10 to 20 hour home day care certification courses. These were designed to: (1) enable women who did not want to take jobs away from home to earn money at home, as well as teaching them about child development, nutrition, and American child care practices; and (2) enable other women to enter the labor force by making culturally-sensitive child care available to members of the refugee community.

Child care training classes were conducted, and most of the clients who completed the classes were successfully certified. However, the child care subsidy funds (on which most refugee families would rely to pay for child care) in this state were exhausted early in the year. Thus, the strategy of improving household income for homebound women by enabling them to provide day care ultimately depended on a funding flow outside the control of the MWE projects. Project staff were not hopeful about attracting American families who would pay for child care due to the generally poor condition of the housing occupied by refugees.

One project offered training in home sewing to homebound women so that they could supplement their income by doing custom sewing and alterations. It is not clear whether this strategy was based on any market analysis or whether the refugees will in fact be able to market their services once training is completed.

One project that offered classroom training in power sewing as its primary service also contracted with manufacturing plants to provide handicraft work (beading and lacing moccasins) on a piecework basis. The trainer would train the number of homebound women interested in doing this work whenever a new job came in, and the women (and other family members) could complete the work at home. While it is difficult to compute a wage rate for this strategy, the piecework volume involved is high enough that is is the most promising of the home work strategies examined; clients generally worked at least 20 hours a week on the piecework, and made substantial contributions in household earnings.

Training in Language Skills

Figure IV-8 summarizes the nature and utilization of language skills training in MWE projects. Most notable are these findings:

- a third of the projects offered no language skills training to participants;
- the other projects all offered either vocational English language training (VELT) or training in English skills (ESL), and four projects offered both;
- however, neither VELT nor ESL were utilized by a high percentage of project participants, even when they were offered.

While most projects usually did not fund ESL directly, several projects built their training programs around attendance at ESL classes funded by ORR social service funds. These projects saw building clients' basic English skills as an important part of skills training.

Figure IV-8

Nature and Utilization of Language Skills Training in MWE Projects

Component and Utilization	No. of Sites
What was offered:	
• VELT only	3
• VELT and ESL	3
• ESL only	2
• Neither ESL nor VELT	4
Sites where one-third or more of the participants utilized the following:	
• VELT	3
• ESL	3

Nature and Utilization of Other Support Services in MWE Projects

Component and Utilization	No. of Sites
What was offered:	
• Child care	
- Child care during training sessions	4
- Help finding child care	6
- None of the above offered	6
• Transportation or related services (bus passes, rides through MAAs, preparation for passing the written test for a driver's license)	9
Sites where one-third or more of the participants utilized the following:	
• Child care	2

Other projects felt that clients would obtain ESL training on their own if they felt it necessary.

What was included under the label of vocational English language training varied. Some projects emphasized general job readiness, such as language skills specific to job interviewing, in their VELT sessions. In others, job counselors would work individually with clients on vocabulary specific to a job placement. Projects also relied on trainers to use job-specific vocabularies while they were instructing project clients in the skills that were required for these jobs, e.g., power sewing.

One project systematically identified vocabularies that were specific to available employment opportunities so that VELT sessions had a highly relevant job-specific focus. At this MWE site, staff visited target industries and did recordings to find out exactly what commands and language their clients would have to respond to. Then they tried to use the same vocabulary in skills training classes for these industries. The aim was not to have conversations, but to get clients to learn what was said and how to respond to it. One teacher concentrated on VELT with half the group while the other teacher taught machine skills to the other half. Then the groups switched.

Other Support Services

Figure IV-8 also summarizes the nature and utilization of child care and transportation services in MWE projects. These are the most prominent findings:

- Half the MWE projects addressed what they saw as their clients' child care needs in some way.
- Four of the projects provided child care directly, but only during training. Three offered care at the training site, and one site offered free child care for up to three months at a center with refugee aides, and included transportation for the children to the center.
- Three-quarters of the MWE projects formally addressed their clients' transportation needs; this service was utilized on an as-needed basis.

An unexpected finding was that supportive services were not utilized very much by the MWE project clients. Nevertheless, staff at the projects that offered on-site child care maintained that without this service, many of their clients would not participate. The clients who used this service were anxious to receive the training and were willing to make other arrangements after placement (usually with project help).

A distinction must be made between offering supportive services during training and setting up some sort of supportive system that will extend beyond placement. Many project staff noted that mothers with young children or large families would refuse to participate in the projects because they knew that it would be difficult to arrange day care after they were employed. The projects offered to help find day care in the community, but many mothers with small children preferred to remain at home. For others, day care was simply not an issue, since adults often worked different shifts or another adult relative was in the home to care for children.

The same is true of transportation services. Projects could offer to drive clients to interviews or provide bus passes, but could do little to overcome long-term problems such as women's reluctance to drive on icy roads. Projects often encouraged clients to obtain driver's licenses (in one case, many clients were driving without licenses), and helped informally with passing the licensing exam.

Job Development, Placement, and Follow-up Practices

Figure IV-9 summarizes approaches to job development, placement, and follow-up in the MWE projects. Most notable are these findings:

- MWE projects were almost evenly divided between emphasizing placement after training, and emphasizing direct placement without prior training.
- Of the six projects which used some form of training to prepare clients for jobs, four emphasized developing jobs for clients with a small number of employers or industries, after short-term customized training (conducted either in a classroom or on the job site). One utilized

Figure IV-9

Approaches to Job Development, Placement and Follow-up in MWE Projects (N=12)

Approach	No. of Sites
Job Development	
Emphasized development of jobs that did not require any formal training or other preparation	6
Emphasized developing jobs with a small number of industries or employers for which short-term training (either classroom or on-site) was sufficient	4
Emphasized developing OJT slots with a variety of small manufacturing firms	1
Other - supported employment	1
Placement	
Most frequently placed clients after training them	5
Most frequently placed clients directly, without training them first	5
Referred most clients elsewhere for placement	2
Follow-up	
Verified at specified intervals the number of refugees, placed through the project, who had retained these jobs	7
Verified retention at 30 days, in order to count jobs as "placements," and at intervals thereafter	4
Did not formally verify*	1

*At this site, one employer trained and employed project participants, and virtually all of them remain there.

short-term OJT contracts with a variety of small manufacturing firms; and one project itself hired refugees as trainees/employees in a sheltered employment setting.

- All of the MWE projects included placement in paid employment in their service packages, although two projects referred their clients to other programs for placement.
- Most MWE projects verified whether clients who had officially been placed by the project still retained those jobs at 30 or 90 days.

Placement and Supportive Counseling

As emphasized earlier, placement frequently followed classroom training at MWE sites. This was not surprising, given that the targeted population was unlikely to have had any previous experience or to have acquired any skills that were directly transferrable to jobs with some potential for advancement (e.g., clothing manufacture, electronics assembly).

Frequently, bilingual project staff accompanied clients to interviews to translate and help them complete forms. Staff even went to the worksite with their refugee clients the first few days to help ease the transition to regular employment.

Supportive counseling could be very labor-intensive, especially during the first weeks that project participants were on their new jobs. For example:

- At some sites, project staff were on call at any hour to help employers and their refugee workers resolve minor or major difficulties.
- Several projects provided intensive one-to-one counseling for clients, frequently through the MAA. The focus of counseling was on encouraging clients to stay with training and employment even when discouraged, and to convince husbands and wives that they both should take jobs to gain self-sufficiency for their households.

Employers appreciated the support that project staff provided for the refugees that they hired. Project staff believed that their efforts ensured that the employers' and the refugees' experiences would be successful, paving the way for placing more refugees with the same employer in the future.

Follow-up

Most MWE projects provided follow-up services "as needed," for example:

- Most projects encouraged employers and refugees to call project staff in case of problems.
- At a few MWE sites, staff also reviewed information in performance reports or other forms that employers filled out at regular intervals.
- Most projects kept in closer contact with clients during the first few weeks of employment than afterward.
- At several sites, the employers were so well known to project staff through their other employment service activities, that follow-up was virtually ongoing, if informal.

Summary

MWE projects offered a broad array of employment-related services. That was to be expected, given ORR's emphasis on attending to a wide array of barriers to employment. For example, nearly all MWE projects included employment assessment, job readiness preparation, job search assistance, and some form of skills training in their service packages.

Placement services at all sites included these elements, in various proportions: job development, coaching clients for job interviews, and accompanying them to interviews and to their first day(s) of on-the-job training or employment.

Direct placement (without training) was provided by about half of the projects, but three-fourths of the projects emphasized training before placement. Apparently, the project participants did need the extra skills training in order to become employable, or they were motivated to get a job for which training was offered (e.g., power sewing, electronics assembly).

ESL and VELT were not routinely offered as part of the service package. This was surprising, given the expectation that the limited English of project clients would constitute a formidable barrier to employment, and considering that ORR's grant announcement had specifically recommended including VESL in the service package. But even when offered, ESL and VESL were not utilized by a high percentage of project participants. These appeared to be the reasons:

- Many entry-level jobs could be learned by watching.
- Refugees were apt to be placed with employers who already had other refugee employees who could help them understand what was expected.
- Employers who had had prior positive experiences with refugee employees trusted project staff to bring them clients who would work out well, even though they lacked English (and vocational) language fluency.
- Many employers perceived refugees to be dependable, hardworking, persevering people whose lack of English language skills and possibly lower initial productivity would be more than compensated for by their reliability and by the satisfactory quality of their work.

On the other hand, vocational English language training (VELT), though not routinely included in MWE project service packages, was mentioned by both project managers and some employers as an area for more attention in the future. It appeared that clients who were motivated to go to work were unable to work out their own child care and transportation problems.

Other services that had less prominence than might be expected for this target group were child care and transportation. Reasons appeared to be that, at some sites, refugees had their own cars, and that adult members of the household could adjust their schedules to share caring for the children. It appeared that clients who were motivated to go to work were able to solve their child care and transportation problems on their own.

OUTCOMES

Nearly all of the MWE projects were still underway at the time statistics were collected for this report, so it is not possible to fully assess the outcomes they achieved. However, by examining planned numbers of enrollments and pro-rating them for the amount of time the projects had been in existence, it is possible to get some idea of whether the projects will reach their goals.

Enrollment

All but two of the projects visited had met and exceeded their enrollment goals, even though they usually had at least another quarter of operation remaining. This makes sense, given that the projects often worked with clients for a few months to prepare them for placement. It should be noted, however, that "enrollment" is a fluid concept that varies considerably from project to project. It is a useful outcome measure only in that it can indicate whether projects are seriously failing to reach their targeted population.

Of the two projects that had not met enrollment goals, one was plagued by a number of problems. First, the project met community resistance since the project services (training in electronics assembly) were more attractive than those available to primary wage earners. After this problem was resolved by enrolling primary wage earners under a "multiple wage earner" concept, the electronics job market collapsed and jobs became very hard to find. In addition, the agency director resigned and the hiatus of leadership meant that no new direction was immediately found. Given the above, it is perhaps impressive that the project was half-way to its enrollment and placement goals after 75% of its operating period had elapsed.

The other project that failed to meet its enrollment goal was already completed at the time of data collection. However, this project had placed nearly everyone it served and had exceeded its placement goal.

Placements

All but two projects (the one with serious enrollment problems and one other) had met or exceeded their numerical placement goals for the entire contract period, in spite of having about 25% of the project operating period remaining. While precise information about the number of training-related placements was not available, it seemed that for the most part MWE clients were placed in the industry for which they were trained, as long as training-related jobs existed. This impressive record seems to indicate that the projects had studied labor market opportunities and had carefully targeted the industries for which they provided training.

The one training strategy that did not result in many placements was day care certification, discussed above. While many women successfully completed the certification process in the four projects (in one state) where training was offered, that state's day care funds were exhausted early in the year. Thus, other refugee families could not make use of child care subsidies to purchase the available services, and American families are not likely to use refugee providers due to the poor housing conditions and fears that refugee caretakers may not be able to communicate well enough in an emergency situation. Some of the certified women may be able to earn money from day care in the future.

While it seemed reasonable to anticipate that MWE projects might concentrate on part-time placements, most of the jobs obtained by MWE participants were full-time. Three projects reported that all of their placements were full-time, and most projects had at least 75% full-time placements. Only two projects had less than 50% full-time placements, and these projects both concentrated on sewing and handicraft work that could be done at home, rather than part-time jobs outside the home.

The types of jobs found through the MWE projects are summarized in Figure IV-10. Many of the projects reported training-related jobs in sewing and electronics assembly, with sewing jobs accounting for all the placements at one project. However, a variety of other manufacturing

Figure IV-10

Outcomes of MWE Projects

Types of Jobs Obtained Through MWE Projects

Type of Job	No. of Projects Reporting This Type of Job	Highest Proportion of Project Participants Placed in This Job Type
Sewing	6	100%
Electronics Assembly	2	20%
Assembly	2	51%
Other Manufacturing	6	49%
Fishery/Agriculture	3	57%
Construction	1	25%
Clerical	4	8%
Service	10	75%

	50% or More Wages Under $3.65/hour	75% or More Wages Under $4.50/hour	Information Not Available
No. of Projects	7	8	3

jobs were represented as well, with eight projects reporting either assembly or other manufacturing work. Three projects placed their clients in agricultural or fishing jobs: one project was located near the largest ginseng-producing area in the U.S., one was near a cucumber-farming project, and one was in a town with both an oyster- and mushroom-farming industry. While these jobs were often appealing to the refugees because they utilized skills they had developed in their home countries and because many family members could participate, they often did not provide stable, year-round employment.

Some projects reported a few clerical placements, but clerical jobs often required greater English language skills than those possessed by the client population. One project reported that a quarter of its placements were in construction; this project was one of the ones with a large number of single males as clients.

Many projects reported that without industry-specific training, the only jobs available to their clients were entry-level service jobs. Most often these placements were in food service, housekeeping, or child care, and they usually paid the minimum wage. Given that many clients had not held a job before and were often shy, homebound women, even these jobs represented a big step forward. Several projects reported that they would have preferred to find factory work or some other job with the potential for higher wages, but that in an economy still feeling the effects of a major recession, this was just not possible.

The wages reported by the projects were generally low, with seven projects having at least half their entry wages below \$3.65 an hour; all but one of the projects for which information was available had more than 75% of wages under \$4.50 an hour. Only one project reported that 26% of wages were in the \$4.51 to \$6.00/hour category.

While these wages are generally lower than those reported by the EST projects, they do indicate that the projects had, in many cases, moved beyond minimum wage jobs. Mostly this was achieved by targeting factory work rather than service work. Mere reporting of entry wages cannot take into account the fact that most factory placements had the potential to generate more income under productivity or merit increases. Thus, even though the MWE projects aimed to produce supplementary income for households, for the most part they did not settle for minimum wage or part-time employment, but attempted to find jobs that paid more initially and had potential for higher wages.

It is not clear, however, how stable the jobs found by the MWE programs will be. In many cases, job retention data are unavailable or unreliable, with confusion prevailing about the conversion of raw retention counts into retention rates. The one project that had been completed for more than 90 days reported a 76% 90-day retention rate.

The probability of stability is related to several factors, including the targeted industry and the definition of "placement." As was pointed out above, farming and fishery jobs are inherently seasonal and thus have a limited potential for being stable, although in some cases they can last six months. In addition, some projects took credit for a placement no matter how short-term; a placement is counted from the first day on the job. This resulted in a number of projects counting temporary and yard work or other one-time housekeeping positions as placements. In contrast, one of the states required that a job last for at least 30 days before it could be counted as a placement. While retention data are not available to document the difference, it seems quite likely that the latter state would have a higher 90-day retention rate since its projects had an incentive to find permanent jobs for their clients.

While the MWE projects met their numerical placement goals and found many jobs for their clients that paid more than minimum wage, these are not the only outcomes by which the projects should be judged. The information available does not indicate, for instance, whether the projects were successful at increasing the number of wage earners in the client families. Many projects served primary wage earners (discussed in "Client Characteristics" above), and no project collected data on the number of wage earners in the family at termination (although at least two projects required that at least one family member was already employed at entry). If the projects served only primary wage earners without serving secondary wage earners in the same household, or if they placed secondary wage earners in families where the primary wage earner was unemployed, they would be seen to be duplicating services provided by regular refugee agencies rather than making additions to those services.

As with client recruitment, the emphasis on individual placement rather than looking at the needs of whole households derives from the projects' attempts to operationalize the concept behind the MWE grants by targeting individual secondary wage earners. This recurring theme will be discussed in the concluding section of this chapter.

Costs

Costs for the MWE projects are generally lower than for the EST projects. Most costs per planned enrollment vary from a low of $333 to a high of $1000, with one project at $2100. Only two projects supplemented discretionary grant funds with outside funds: one project funded an electronics assembly trainer through JTPA and one project doing power sewing training nearly doubled its budget through Title V of the Older Americans Act and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds.

Costs per planned placement were calculated for states; from the lowest to the highest they were: $623, $1,667, $1,778, $2,826, and $4,403. The state with the lowest planned costs had a relatively bare-bones program except for one site where funds were supplemented (the latter project had a cost per planned placement of $1,149 if all funds are counted). However, given that some kind of training was offered in nearly all sites, the differences seem very large and are not explained by any obvious program design factors such as length of training. Most cost figures were, however, lower than the FY83 Targeted Assistance cost per placement of $3,025.

It is impossible to gauge cost-effectiveness, since none of the projects calculated welfare grant reduction. Because a number of clients were not receiving cash assistance at entry to the projects, however, a cost-effectiveness measure would have to look beyond the immediate grant reduction outcome to consider outcomes such as prevention of secondary migration.

CONTEXTUAL FACTORS INFLUENCING CLIENT OUTCOMES

It is impossible to understand the implementation experiences and accomplishments of the MWE projects without considering the labor market and welfare system contexts in which they operated. The following findings are especially important:

- Two of the five states where MWE projects were located have high benefit levels and high welfare utilization rates. One of the two states made AFDC-U available and experienced substantial secondary in-migration; the benefits available to large families create severe work disincentives. In the other state, welfare utilization tends to be high until the end of the 18-month eligibility; after that, strict interpretation of the work history requirement means that most refugee households are not eligible for AFDC.
- In three MWE states, welfare utilization tends to be low. None of these three states make AFDC-U easily available, and welfare benefits range from low to moderate. In one of the three states, medical assistance is available to income-eligible refugees who do not choose to apply for cash assistance.
- Three states suffered from depressed economies. In one of these, this situation contributed to the state's high welfare utilization rate and to the difficulty that four of the state's MWE projects had in finding jobs for their clients.
- In two MWE states, the economic situation was much better, although in one of these states employment in the electronics industry, where many refugees preferred to work, was volatile.
- In some instances, MWE projects were able to target industries with good employment opportunities (e.g.,

None of the projects studied are really examples of the "integrated concept" approach to MWE implementation, which is understandable given that the discretionary grant funds had to be separately accounted for. One project came very close, however. This project was run by a consortium of agencies that represented the full range of existing services to refugees. In order to target the grant monies, the project only categorized certain clients as MWE clients: these were refugees with particular barriers to employment in the households where at least one person (not necessarily the household head) was already employed. The refugees served could be very new arrivals or could have been in the U.S. for a number of years. Thus, while this project came closest to the concept of looking at the total needs of the household and attempting to place several wage earners if necessary to raise the household out of poverty, the project still waited until that first person was employed before it targeted the household for services from the MWE project. In practice this does not necessarily prevent project clients from receiving any services (since they could go to ESL and job readiness classes immediately), but it did delay access to the skills training provided with MWE funds.

This project made less of a distinction between "primary" and "secondary" wage earners than the projects that operated as add-ons to existing service structures. As long as one person was employed, the rest of the potential wage earners could be considered. While it may have been that the head of household was more likely to have work experience and thus be more easily directly placed, this was not always the case, and heads of households did receive training. This project also admitted non-MWE clients to training on a space available basis (these clients were not included in MWE reporting) since the training was as appropriate for single parents and single adults with no work experience or skills as it was for clients in households with more than one wage earner. (The other project that integrated the MWE projects with its other services also served sizeable proportions of single parents and single adults, but it reported them as MWE clients.)

Thus, most of the MWE projects took an operational approach when designing programs. Since it was likely that the secondary wage earners power sewing), regardless of the larger economic and labor market situation.

- The economic and welfare environments had implications for project implmentation and outcomes. Projects in good economies had trouble recruiting clients because they tended to find jobs on their own. In states with higher welfare benefits, clients needed a bigger incentive to take a job than when benefits were low. If high welfare benefits were available in a sluggish economy, it was even more difficult to recruit and place clients.

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

ORR's program to lift families out of poverty by systematically attempting to increase the number of household wage earners is an innovative approach that is ahead of its time compared to other government-sponsored employment programs. In the country as a whole, the percent of families in which at least two adults worked outside the home increased from about 43 percent in 1960 to nearly 69 percent in 1984, as large numbers of secondary wage earners in those families entered the labor force.[1] The mainstream government employment programs, however, have continued to operate on the assumption that a household will have a single or "primary" wage earner, usually the male. The refugee program has been one of the first publicly-funded programs to recognize the opportunities for household self-sufficiency from the entry of multiple workers into the labor force, and to attempt to encourage and facilitate this phenomenon.

The multiple wage earner approach is especially appropriate in the refugee program where many household heads are likely to have little formal education, labor market experience, or English language proficiency, all of which limit their access to the declining pool of well-paying manufacturing jobs. While the ORR-funded refugee employment service providers have been preoccupied with ensuring rapid placement of these heads of households into employment, other household members are potential wage-earners as well. As refugee families continue to live in the U.S., they come to the same conclusion as the thousands of American families with more than one wage earner: that especially in large families, the increase of household income through the addition of a second or third paycheck can mean the difference between poverty and a more comfortable life. In fact, the Refugee Self-Sufficiency Study found that nearly 50 percent of the families in the U.S. longer than three years had more than one wage earner. The Multiple Wage Earner program offered the opportunity to speed up this process by offering counseling and supportive services to all members·of the families where one or more secondary wage earners have the possibility to enter the labor market.

While the strategy of employing multiple wage earners from the same household seems an innovative and achievable way to assist refugee families in earning their way out of poverty, the stories of the MWE projects studied in this evaluation offer examples of how this deceptively simple concept can have unexpected pitfalls.

A multiple wage earner strategy could be implemented in two ways: as an "add-on" program to serve secondary wage earners in an existing service structure that serves primary wage earners, or as an integral concept (rather than a separate program) in an ongoing service structure. Another dimension of variation exists: a MWE strategy could be used to serve old arrivals or new arrivals or both. The possible combinations are shown in Figure IV-11.

Most of the present MWE projects fall into categories A or C -- separately-funded, separately-staffed programs that exist alongside the formula-funded ORR social service system. As has been discussed above, since the agencies running the MWE programs were not the agencies operating other refugee employment programs, the MWE agencies were led to operationalize their goals by targeting secondary wage earners, usually in households where the primary wage earner was already employed. Projects that searched for clients among families with one household member already employed were likely to be serving earlier arrivals, and thus be in category A. MWE projects also received referrals from other service providers who were attempting to find primary wage earners their first jobs, so they also fell into category C. No MWE project concentrated exclusively on new arrivals.

Figure IV-11

Possible Implementation Strategies for MWE Approach

	Add-on Program	Integral Concept
Serve old arrivals	A	D
Serve new arrivals	B	E
Serve all refugees	C	F

targeted by the projects were women and youth, the training opportunities developed were designed with those groups in mind -- and women were targeted much more often than youths. Because hand sewing is a skill possessed by many refugee women, the extension to home machine sewing and factory sewing makes sense. Child care appears to be a service needed if refugee mothers are to enter the labor market successfully, and training those refugee women who are not yet ready to obtain work outside the home to provide the needed child care appears to be a sensible strategy. Electronics assembly is a popular job goal among refugees. The one training course developed especially for youth -- in cash register operation -- was suited to the higher numeracy skills possessed by that group and targeted a growing part-time job market.

The strategy of offering suitable training to women and youth who were secondary wage earners was in fact highly successful in most cases. It failed to live up to expectations only when one of the assumptions behind the operational strategy broke down: either when the "market" for the occupation failed (i.e., the electronics industry collapsed or child care funds were exhausted) or, most notably, when the supposedly-employed primary wage earners were not employed or were employed at jobs with which they were dissatisfied. In the latter cases, to offer an enriched service package to secondary wage earners appeared unfair, and projects were pressured to admit the primary wage earners as well. While the outcome is not a violation of the MWE concept, that concept had been mostly left behind as the projects developed operational definitions, and it had to be rediscovered.

Not all the MWE projects developed classroom training courses or used training as a primary strategy. Since all the projects met or exceeded their placement goals, it is clear that training is not a necessary condition for placement of previously underserved clients. It is too early to tell whether clients placed after training are more likely to retain jobs or earn more than clients placed directly. However, projects that developed short-term training were enthusiastic about its potential, and the efficiency of teaching workplace norms and specific job skills to a group rather than a series of individuals seems obvious. As was pointed out above, not all sites will offer the potential for group instruction or placement. Where it is feasible, however, short-term classroom training seems to have tremendous value as a morale booster for underserved groups, and may serve the same purpose for any client group without previous work experience.

The problem of losing sight of the MWE concept would not exist if that concept were built into ongoing service structures rather than being fenced off into separate programs. The demonstration projects have shown that refugee women and youth can indeed become successful wage earners in spite of their lack of work experience and low English proficiency, if strategies are carefully designed. The strategies that were important, and which could be incorporated into an ongoing structure, are:

- Counseling of all family members about the appropriateness of non-heads of households entering the labor market. This is a function especially well performed by MAAs or bilingual staff, and can be accomplished by example as well as verbally. This message could even be incorporated into overseas preparation.
- Development of short-term (1-2 month) training courses that:
    - -- are targeted to an industry or plant where jobs are plentiful, especially those industries or occupations where groups of refugees could be placed after training;
    - -- are designed to allow clients to learn primarily by doing, with bilingual staff support;
    - -- incorporate teaching of job-specific vocabulary;
    - -- have adequate staffing for placement and follow-up;
- If necessary, development of separate training courses for refugees from very different backgrounds, such as those from urban and rural backgrounds;
- Strategic placement of those clients most likely to succeed, since a firm will consider hiring more refugees and recommend the practice to similar firms if its first experiences are positive.

Another strategy that would be important in implementing the MWE approach as an integral concept in an ongoing service system would be to *move beyond individual placement goals* as the only measure of project success. Instead, staff should be held accountable for *increasing total household earnings*, by placing either several household members during the same period or additional household members where one member is already employed.

CHAPTER IV NOTES

[1] U.S. Department of Commerce, *The Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1985*, Washington, D.C.: p. 399, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1984.

V. LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

SUMMARY OF IMPLEMENTATION EXPERIENCE

The Multiple Wage Earner and Enhanced Skills Training projects summarized in this volume were part of a federal effort to learn from and develop innovative programming in response to social science research on the experience of refugees who arrived in the U. S. during the late 1970's and early 1980's (primarily refugees from Southeast Asia). This research, described in Chapter I, has indicated that although the earnings of refugee households are gradually increasing over time, there is no evidence that many or most refugees are advancing from lower paying jobs to higher paying jobs. Instead, the factor most strongly associated with increased household earnings is the number of wage earners in the household. The Enhanced Skills Training grants were designed to address the first research finding -- that upward job mobility is not occurring -- by putting a greater effort into addressing specific skills deficits and creating a good job match between individual refugee interests and skills, on the one hand, and labor market opportunities, on the other hand, especially for refugees who have experienced difficulty in obtaining stable employment. The Multiple Wage Earner grants were designed to take advantage of the second research finding -- that having multiple wage earners is an effective way for refugee households to escape poverty. Thus, these grants were designed to recruit household members who may not have had access to employment services previously, and to design comprehensive service packages to overcome employment barriers for these underserved groups.

The questions to be addressed by this study included (1) whether the two strategies of enhanced skills training and multiple wage earner projects were sound in practice; and (2) what specific implementation practices and contextual variables facilitated or hindered project effectiveness in meeting federal objectives. It is difficult to assess the effectiveness of these grant strategies as conceptualized by ORR, because they were rarely realized in a "pure" form during the project implementation phase. Projects often lost track of the ORR objectives. EST projects usually did not provide training, and especially not training designed to move refugees into jobs paying enough to remove them from cash assistance; and MWE projects operationalized their objectives by targeting secondary wage earners, not households.

The inattention to federal objectives was most clear when client recruitment and screening practices were examined. The difficulties were due not only to service provider misunderstanding of objectives, but to the organizational position of the projects. Because some of the EST and most of the MWE projects were developed and implemented apart from the overall refugee service system, several problems emerged with recruitment. First, some agencies did not have access to a large enough pool of clients to determine which ones would most benefit from the special strategies developed for EST and MWE clients. If they did not serve all clients who requested services they could not meet their quotas. Other agencies felt compelled to serve all clients who requested assistance -- whether or not the EST or MWE strategy was appropriate -- because they were uncertain if other services were available to the clients they did not assist. Further, many agencies did not have adequate links to other employment services and could not therefore ensure that their clients would receive the training or other services available through these other agencies. Finally, agencies serving secondary wage earners were often unaware of the efforts made on behalf of the primary wage earners within the family since they were usually served by other refugee agencies. It was therefore difficult to plan a household strategy.

Because the EST and MWE projects could not scan the available universe to find the most appropriate clients, they lost sight of federal objectives when implementing their service strategies. EST projects, in particular, usually did not offer training, but adopted general purpose job placement approaches. The kind of training used most often was OJT, but projects usually used OJT funds to encourage employers to hire refugees in entry-level jobs, rather than to enhance the skills of refugees who had the potential to move beyond that level.

MWE projects had fewer problems developing a service strategy, but often had more difficulty with identifying appropriate clients. Because they defined their target population narrowly, as secondary wage earners, they often turned away unemployed primary wage earners who needed or wanted service.

Thus, while both kinds of projects were likely to meet their numerical placement goals, it is difficult to learn from placement rates whether the two discretionary grant programs were successful in terms of meeting the federal objectives of providing training to significantly disadvantaged refugees and increasing the number of household wage earners. However, looking broadly across the two kinds of projects is informative in that they illustrate a variety of possible approaches to training that could be implemented in formula-funded refugee employment programs.

The term "training" can cover a multitude of services, including long-term classroom training lasting one to two years; on-the-job training, where employees' wage bills are subsidized until their productivity matches that of other workers; training at simulated work sites, where trainees meet a set of graduated demands over time; customized training for a particular employer; or short-term classroom training lasting only a few months. In addition to the various kinds of vocational skills training, instruction in basic language and mathematics skills may also be included in the term "training".

In the 1970's, classroom training got a poor reputation. It was thought to be too expensive and to have only tenuous connections to the actual world of work. These criticisms are properly leveled at some kinds of classroom training, especially long-term training that is offered year after year without curriculum revision to take into account changes in the workplace. However, as federal training funds became more scarce, short-term training developed with the cooperation of the private sector became more the norm. In addition, experiments with various "hard-to-serve" groups (e.g., long-term welfare recipients, the disabled) led to training models that took place in classrooms, but used a curriculum and schedule that was as much like an actual work site as possible. Another discovery of recent years is that most companies "train" their employees during their first weeks or months on the job, whether they are reimbursed with OJT funds or not; it is simply true that few new employees instantaneously reach top productivity.

It is useful to think about the kinds of jobs for which the different kinds of training are appropriate. Most entry-level jobs require little skills training; however, they require a certain familiarity with workplace norms and a short period of productivity adjustment. Jobs paying higher salaries often require more complex skills that can be learned in classroom settings, although the needed skills may be educational (i.e., proficiency in English or math) as well as vocational.

Both the MWE and EST projects placed a majority of their clients in entry-level jobs. The MWE projects most often targeted specific industries and provided short-term customized classroom training, using donated machinery and materials. This training had two purposes: it familiarized clients, most of whom had no work experience, with American workplace norms, and it taught clients the vocabulary and skills that an American counterpart would have picked up easily during the first few days on the job. The training was short, so it was not very expensive; it was industry-specific, so only a limited amount of vocabulary and information had to be absorbed; and it was offered to a group, so that common cultural barriers and experiential deficits (e.g., how machines work) could be addressed, and clients could offer each other mutual support. The MWE projects thus unconsciously drew on the training models developed over the last ten years.

The EST projects usually used OJT subsidies to place their clients in entry-level jobs; these could be new arrivals getting their first jobs or older arrivals making lateral moves. Their clients were more likely to be men and hence either had some work experience or came to projects with the assumption that working outside the home was appropriate. Projects seldom used OJT to get refugees jobs with sufficient earnings to remove large families from cash assistance. Thus, the OJT subsidy served to induce employers to "take a chance" on a refugee employee over another available entry-level employee; as with many OJT programs, it is not clear how many of the clients would have been hired anyway.

Projects that tried to implement strategies that would lead to non-entry-level jobs had two alternatives: they could design their own classroom training programs, or they could place clients in mainstream training slots. The former strategy was tried by one project, and its plan came closest to a pure EST model: it adapted a machinist training course for refugee clients by extending the course over more weeks and adding language training. However, even at the slower pace, it was difficult to find enough refugees with sufficient basic skills to successfully complete the course. Projects that attempted to use mainstream training also found that their clients' lack of basic skills often precluded success.

Lack of basic skills, especially English language skills, was one reason why refugees had trouble completing training programs. In addition, many of the employers interviewed thought that lack of English would prevent their refugee employees from advancing within the company, even when their performance in entry-level jobs was highly satisfactory. However, since English training was not required by the EST grant anouncement, it was neither emphasized by the EST projects nor demanded by refugee clients. This is a puzzling finding, but it can perhaps be explained by the reluctance of many adult refugees to spend extended periods of time in school-like settings. Unless the instruction had a very clear and immediate job objective, many refugees were uninterested in classroom training, whether in vocational or English skills. At one site, we were told that refugees believed that "America is where you come to get a job, not sit in a classroom."

The lack of refugee interest in long-term vocational or English training, as well as the expense associated with long-term courses and the risk that the labor market will change considerably between the planning and implementation stages, do not bode well for traditional classroom training approaches in refugee employment programs. However, the MWE projects showed that a much less lofty approach -- leading not to jobs with entry wages high enough to remove a household from welfare dependency, but to entry-level positions with opportunities for advancement -- has the potential to be more widely used. Many refugees without previous work experience, not only homebound women and youth, would benefit from a solid grounding in workplace norms and the specific skills needed in a particular kind of worksite.

It is clear that training is not necessary in order to place underserved groups. Not all of the MWE projects utilized short-term classroom training; even in sites where it was a primary strategy, many clients were placed without training. The experience of the three EST projects serving older workers is also illustrative: at these sites, staff felt that the important strategy was spotlighting the over-45 group and systematically presenting their virtues to employers, not training them. The older refugees needed special attention and marketing rather than vocational skills.

Because classroom training involves groups of refugees, it is not appropriate for all sites; many areas will not have plants or industries available that can absorb large numbers of new employees. Where possible, however, the short-term classroom training approach would broaden the opportunities now available through direct placement, which are more likely to be service jobs with little advancement potential.

LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

The lessons to be learned from the EST and MWE grants are not, we feel, how to implement better EST and MWE projects, but rather how to incorporate the EST and MWE strategies and insights into the comprehensive refugee service system available in local areas. Although the suggestions below were certainly stimulated by our examination of the EST and MWE projects, they also represent a creative leap, since the actual discretionary projects did not always provide an adequate test of the hypotheses or conclusively indicate a direction for future action. The lessons are presented as generalizations to guide federal and state policy makers in how to further EST and MWE objectives.

Clarifying Objectives and Developing Accountability Mechanisms

Lesson #1

When implementing demonstration projects, all participating organizations need to understand what innovative approaches the demonstration project is intended to test and what specific objectives the project is designed to achieve, and should have committed themselves to this purpose. Most of the EST sites disagreed with the basic thrust of the program. Seeing placement into any available job as the primary objective, they failed to utilize training opportunities that might have enabled refugees to attain wages sufficient to remove their families from cash assistance. The MWE programs understood the basic intent of the program--to provide employment for additional wage earners--but they did not necessarily see the effort as a multiple wage earner strategy, instead defining themselves as secondary wage earner projects. As a result, neither the EST or MWE projects met the objectives of the federal grant programs nor did they provide an adequate test of their strategies.

Clarification of objectives could be achieved through regional meetings of demonstration project operators, or earlier monitoring by federal staff who examine program strategies to see if they meet demonstration objectives. Otherwise, the special project funds will be viewed as an expansion of resources to accomplish local goals or to do more of what is already being done.

Lesson #2

Demonstration projects should have different reporting requirements from formula-funded programs, and these requirements should be uniform across the country. This would allow ORR to determine whether projects met the federal objectives by looking beyond simple placement rates because placement rates are not, by themselves, a meaningful measure of program success. Data on characteristics, skills levels, and English proficiency must be correlated with outcomes in order to assess projects.

To assess the impact of training, projects should be required to document required job skills, skills deficits prior to training and the role of training in providing needed job skills. Information about prior and subsequent earnings levels and job retention is also critical. To assess the impact of a multiple wage earner approach, projects should be required to document the relationship between job placement and subsequent increases in total household income. Both kinds of projects should be required to document that families were lifted out of poverty and/or off the welfare rolls, and to distinguish between placements in temporary and permanent jobs.

Building EST and MWE Objectives into the Existing Refugee Service System

Lesson #3

The objectives of (1) providing skills training (whether "enhanced" or designed to help clients get entry-level jobs) when necessary and appropriate, and (2) encouraging the employment of multiple wage earners, particularly in large households, should be built into the ongoing refugee resettlement system, rather than attempting to implement separate discretionary projects to accomplish these objectives. Service providers should be given an incentive to work with large families or clients with multiple barriers by getting credit for the increase in household earnings in addition to individual placement counts.

Lesson #4

Service providers should be required to develop a plan or strategy to make a whole household self-sufficient using a combination of skills training, direct job placement assistance, and multiple wage earner services that is appropriate to that household's needs, skills, and preferences, and local labor market conditions. Large households may require the wages of multiple wage earners in order to escape poverty, whereas smaller households may benefit from the higher wages that the primary wage earner might earn after completing a skills training program.

Including Skills Training in Service Options

Lesson #5

Skills training is not necessarily the appropriate solution for all refugees with significant employment disadvantages, or in all labor markets. Skills training designed to enable refugees to get jobs at wages sufficient to remove households from public assistance usually requires that trainees have some basic work and English or math skills. Thus, refugees most able to complete skills training programs may not be the highest priority for service using refugee program dollars, since they will usually not be looking for a first job. The refugees who have the greatest interest in training appear to be those who have been in the country for some time and who desire job upgrading; these refugees do not seem to be successful in gaining access to mainstream training programs such as JTPA or community colleges. Some of the EST projects successfully utilized mainstream training for their clients, but data are so sketchy that more work would need to be done to determine exactly when that strategy is likely to be successful.

Another kind of skills training is the short-term classroom training developed by the MWE projects. It was not designed to enhance the skills of clients who had already worked and possessed basic skills, but rather to allow clients with no work experience and limited English to effectively compete with other applicants for entry-level manufacturing jobs. Thus, it assumes that sufficient jobs exist to make group training worthwhile and that the cost of training is minimal compared to the cost of maintaining families on public assistance. When the labor market is strong only in the entry-level service area, direct placement will usually be preferable to any intensive training program.

Lesson #6

When considering the possibility of providing skills training to refugees, using refugee program dollars, service providers should first think carefully about:

- the characteristics of the trainees for whom the skills training is intended (e.g., homebound women, older workers, youth, refugees who want job upgrades in a specific industry);

- the goal of the training;
- whether the training goals are feasible in the given labor market; and
- whether training is necessary to achieve those goals in the given labor market.

Plans for training should be implemented if and only if there is strong evidence that the lack of skills training is a barrier to employment, and that the planned training will enable refugees to obtain employment in the intended occupation(s).

Implementing Multiple Wage Earner Objectives

Lesson #7

Although it may be most effective to use household strategies as part of mainstream employment programs, agencies running those programs, when not themselves MAAs, may need the assistance of refugee-run organizations. The MWE projects implemented by MAAs were generally effective in identifying clients and encouraging them to enroll in the project. In particular, refugee women who served as bilingual staff in the MWE projects were able to also serve as role models to the clients they sought to recruit. MAAs were also able to design programs taking into account cultural reservations about multiple wage earners. Therefore, in furthering multiple wage earner objectives, states should consider involving MAAs in the provision of outreach and supportive counseling to encourage work motivation and to resolve cultural and familial tensions about the issue of wives working outside the home.

Lesson #8

States and projects may want to onsider utilizing group training (i.e., classroom) and group placement (i.e., more than one refugee at a job site) to serve clients with little paid work experience (e.g., older refugees or women). The MWE project experience showed that group training was one effective way to provide mutual support to participants who were fearful of entering the labor market. Both EST and MWE projects found that clients were more willing to take jobs at work sites where they would not be the only refugee present.

APPENDIX: PROJECT PROFILES

APPENDIX: PROJECT PROFILES

Enhanced Skills Training Projects

Atlanta, Georgia
Rockford, Illinois
Baltimore, Maryland
Lincoln, Nebraska
Meadowlands, New Jersey
Camden, New Jersey
New York, New York
Marion, North Carolina
Fairfax County, Virginia
Seattle, Washington
Eau Claire, Wisconsin
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Multiple Wage Earner Projects

Tucson, Arizona
Rockford, Illinois
St. Louis, Missouri
Olympia, Washington
Spokane, Washington (Lao Family Community)
Spokane, Washington (Washington Association of Churches)
Vancouver, Washington
Eau Claire, Wisconsin
Milwaukee, Wisconsin (Hmong American Friendship Association)
Milwaukee, Wisconsin (Lao Family Community)
Oshkosh, Wisconsin
Wausau, Wisconsin

PROJECT PROFILES

1. Project Location: Atlanta, Georgia

2. Organization Operating Project: Lutheran Ministries of Georgia

3. Start Date - End Date: November 1984 - March 1986

4. Funding Level: Enhanced Skills Training Grant - $82,500

5. Target Population: Refugees who:

   - Are cash assistance recipients;
   - Have a history of employment problems;
   - Have limited English;
   - Have physical or emotional limitations; or
   - Are unable to move beyond entry-level employment.

6. Description of Service Strategy: Use of OJT or classroom skills training to assist refugees with a history of employment difficulties. (Other refugees are served under Lutheran Ministries regular program which emphasizes direct placement.)

7. Primary Services: OJT contracts of varying duration, classroom skills training through JTPA.

8. Support Services: Interpretation, translation (funded from other sources).

9. Desired Outcomes:

   -- Number Served - 120
   -- Number Trained - 62
   -- Number Placed - 46

10. Notes on Context:

    -- Welfare System - AFDC is not available to two-parent households; benefit levels are low.

    -- Refugee Population - Half of Georgia's 9,000 refugees reside in the Atlanta area. Most are Southeast Asian with smaller numbers of Ethiopians, Afghans and Poles. Refugee welfare utilization rates are low.

    -- Labor Market - Unemployment is low; the service sector is booming.

    -- Refugee Service System - The project operator is an experienced refugee service provider. Coordination occurs with both the State Manpower Employment Services and JTPA.

PROJECT PROFILES

1. Project Location: Rockford, Illinois

2. Organization Operating Project: Rockford Consortium (Goodwill Industries, MAA, community college)

3. Start Date - End Date: November 1984 - October 1985

4. Funding Level: Enhanced Skills Training Grant - $74,180

5. Target Population: Refugees who meet at least one of the following criteria:

   - On cash assistance;
   - In the U.S. 36 months or more; or
   - Could benefit from machinist training.

6. Description of Service Strategy: Provision of classroom training in machinist skills (8 weeks long) for several groups of refugees, to open up job opportunities as machinists; later, classroom training in electronics assembly.

7. Primary Services: Classroom machinist training with on-site ESL.

8. Support Services: Daycare while in training.

9. Desired Outcomes:

   -- Number Served - 80
   -- Number Trained - 80
   -- Number Placed - 65

10. Notes on Context:

    -- Welfare System - AFDC is available to two-parent households but the strict prior work history requirements make the program inaccessible to most refugees.

    -- Refugee Population - Rockford's small refugee population is primarily Southeast Asian. The local welfare utilization rate among local refugees is low.

    -- Labor Market - The recession adversely affected manufacturing jobs. More jobs are available in services sector. Project overestimated the demand for machinists.

    -- Refugee Service System - This is Goodwill Industries' first attempt to offer training to refugees. The local MAA participated in the project.

PROJECT PROFILES

1. Project Location: Baltimore, Maryland

2. Organization Operating Project: Associated Catholic Charities

3. Start Date - End Date: December 1984 - April 1986

4. Funding Level: Enhanced Skills Training Grant - $79,705

5. Target Population:

   - Refugees on public assistance;
   - Refugees with low English skills;
   - Refugees with moderate English skills who are unskilled or need VELT; or
   - Refugees who are marginally employed.

6. Description of Service Strategy: The project targeted small employers in a range of business -- automotive, electroplating, machine shops, silver plating -- using OJT of 2 months duration as an incentive.

7. Primary Services: VESL (a 4-week job readiness course) and OJT.

8. Support Services: Counseling with Catholic Charities Caseworkers

9. Desired Outcomes:

   -- Number Served - not stated
   -- Number Trained - 78
   -- Number Placed - 50

10. Notes on Context:

    -- Welfare System - AFDC benefit levels are moderate, and welfare utilization rates are low.

    -- Refugee Population - Baltimore's refugee population of 2,500 is very diverse ethnically, with large groups of Southeast Asians and Eastern Europeans and smaller groups of Africans, Middle Eastern and Latin American refugees.

    -- Labor Market - Job opportunities for refugees exist in service, hotel and manufacturing enterprises.

    -- Refugee Service System - The project operator is the major provider of ORR-funded services for refugees.

PROJECT PROFILES

1. Project Location: **Lincoln, Nebraska**

2. Organization Operating Project: The Refugee Center (a new community-based entity, formerly part of Catholic Social Services)

3. Start Date - End Date: October 1984 - March 1986

4. Funding Level: Enhanced Skills Training Grant: $150,000

5. Target Population: All refugee adults on cash assistance, including refugees who are unemployed, underemployed and in danger of secondary migration, or newly arrived.

6. Description of Service Strategy: The strategy was to use OJT contracts of 10 to 26 weeks duration to get local employers to take a chance on refugees they would not otherwise have hired.

7. Primary Services: Assessment, OJT, VESL, survival skills training, follow-up.

8. Support Services: Title XX day care while in ESL or survival skills training. Transportation can be provided by intake workers.

9. Desired Outcomes:

   -- Number Served - 289
   -- Number Trained - 60
   -- Number Placed - 60

10. Notes on Context:

    -- Welfare System - AFDC payment levels are low, as are welfare utilization rates.

    -- Refugee Population - The predominant refugee group in the county containing the project is Vietnamese. Small numbers of Cambodian, Afghan, Polish, Lao and Ethiopian refugees are also present. The welfare utilization rate among refugees is low.

    -- Labor Market - Unemployment is low, around 4%. The local area has manufacturing and government jobs.

    -- Refugee Service System - The project operator is the only ORR-funded refugee social service provider. Referrals to JTPA are coordinated by the project, which assists JTPA in assessing refugee applicants on a fee-for-service basis.

PROJECT PROFILES

1. Project Location: (1) Meadowlands Area, Northern New Jersey
(2) Camden, Southern New Jersey

2. Organization Operating Project: International Institute in collaboration with the New Jersey Department of Labor - North Site; Catholic Community Services in collaboration with the New Jersey Department of Labor - South Site.

3. Start Date - End Date: North Site: March 1985 - March 1986
South Site: May 1985 - March 1986

4. Funding Type and Level: Enhanced Skills Training Grant. Two New Jersey Project sites combined: $161,888.

5. Target Population: Refugees receiving cash assistance (including RCA or AFDC, or GA)

6. Description of Service Strategy: The strategy was to use "customized training" (an OJT program developed by the state for other disadvantaged groups) for refugees using support services provided by the International Institute and Catholic Community Services. In practice, the resettlement agencies had to be more active than anticipated in job development efforts for their participants.

7. Primary Services: Assessment, OJT, classroom training, placement, counseling.

8. Support Services: No separate support services.

9. Desired Outcomes:

Two New Jersey projects combined:

-- Number Served - 75
-- Number Trained - 52
-- Number Placed - 49

10. Notes on Context:

-- Welfare System - AFDC benefit levels are high. AFDC-U is available to two-parent households

-- Refugee Population - New Jersey's refugee population is predominantly Vietnamese. Clients of projects are largely Southeast Asian single males in their twenties and thirties without marketable work experience. The two project sites account for the majority of the refugees on cash assistance in the state.

-- Labor Market - Northern New Jersey: High unemployment (9-10%). Many residents obtain jobs in New York City.
Camden: Opportunities in manufacturing assembly work, but very high unemployment (12%).

-- Refugee Service System - The project operators in Camden and Meadowlands are experienced refugee service providers. Interagency coordination and referral were extensive in the Camden site. A key element of the project design in both sites is participation by the New Jersey Department of Labor, whose "customized training" model is being used.

PROJECT PROFILES

1. Project Location: New York City, New York. Two service sites, one in Brooklyn and one in the Bronx.

2. Organization Operating Project: New York Association for New America (NYANA)

3. Start Date - End Date: October 1, 1985 - September 31, 1986

4. Funding Type and Level: Enhanced Skills Training Grant: $296,000

5. Target Population: Older refugees (over 45 years of age). Southeast Asian refugees targeted at Bronx site. Eastern European and Soviet refugees targeted at Brooklyn site. Expected 85% of clients to be cash assistance recipients.

6. Description of Service Strategy: Intended strategy was to use both OJT contracts and classroom training to locate full and part-time jobs for clients with small local employers. Project found that refugees wanted full-time jobs and weren't generally interested in available classroom training.

7. Primary Services: Assessment, ESL classes, referral to and purchase of classroom training, development of OJT positions, direct placement and job search assistance, counseling.

8. Support Services: Bus tokens; no distinct support services, separate from counseling.

9. Desired Outcomes:

   -- Number Served - 175
   -- Number Trained - 100
   -- Number Placed - 105

10. Notes on Context:

    -- Welfare System - AFDC is available to two-parent households. State-funded Home Relief offers assistance to other indigent households. Benefit levels are high.

    -- Refugee Population - This project is targeting two distinct refugee populations: Eastern Europeans in Brooklyn (many came from the Soviet Union 1979-1981) and Southeast Asians in the Bronx (primarily Cambodians). The welfare utilization rate is relatively high among both groups; although the Soviet refugees often qualify for unemployment benefits (since they have held jobs previously).

    -- Labor Market - Extremely diverse economy; project initially wanted to target smaller employers; now thinks larger employers may be more likely to offer fringe benefits (like health insurance).

    -- Refugee Service System - A number of service providers are available in Brooklyn to serve the Eastern Europeans and referral efforts are made to coordinate resources. In the Bronx, the project site is the sole agency serving its target population. An experienced skills training provider is the subcontractor to provide training to clients from both sites.

PROJECT PROFILES

1. Project Location: Marion, North Carolina

2. Organization Operating Project: Hmong Natural Association

3. Start Date - End Date: June 1985 - September 1986

4. Funding Level: Enhanced Skills Training Grant: $66,015

5. Target Population: Hmong refugees, including those who are unemployed; employed but with family income below poverty level; or employed, but receiving public assistance.

6. Description of Service Strategy: The project included several distinct strategies: a farming project to teach American farming methods; a craft project to coordinate the production and sale of crafts; and several tools to assist participants in obtaining paid employment: OJT, salary supplements (not yet implemented) and technical school training (not yet implemented).

7. Primary Services: Farming training, craft coordination, 24-week long OJT contracts.

8. Support Services: Transportation, ESL, case management (provided by MAA, using other funding).

9. Desired Outcomes:

   -- Number Served - 29
   -- Number Trained - 29
   -- Number Placed - 20

10. Notes on Context:

    -- Welfare System - Benefit levels are low and create no work disincentive.

    -- Refugee Population - North Carolina's 6,000 Southeast Asian refugees include about 600 Hmong. Several hundred refugees from other countries also reside in the state. Welfare utilization rates among refugees are very low (11%).

    -- Labor Market - Unemployment is relatively low (5.6%). Job opportunities for refugees include electronics, furniture manufacture, machine repair and textile businesses.

    -- Refugee Service System - The project operator, an MAA, also operates other refugee services. There is little contact with mainstream job training providers.

PROJECT PROFILES

1. Project Location: Fairfax County, Virginia

2. Organization Operating Project: Senior Employment Resources (SER) under contract to the Fairfax County Department of Manpower Services

3. Start Date - End Date: March 1985 - June 1986

4. Funding Level: Enhanced Skills Training Grant: $212,398

5. Target Population: Refugees over 45 years old

6. Description of Service Strategy: Client screening and referral to the project were performed by the County Department of Manpower Services. Strategy was to use OJT contracts, ESL, and classroom training, in combination with a system of peer "mentors," to place refugees in jobs. In actuality, counseling and direct placement were used almost exclusively.

7. Primary Services: Assessment, counseling, direct placement, OJT, classroom training, ESL, peer support

8. Support Services: No separate services

9. Desired Outcomes:

   -- Number Served - 147
   -- Number Trained - not stated
   -- Number Placed - 96

10. Notes on Context:

    -- Welfare System - Welfare benefit levels are high. AFDC is available only to single parent households.

    -- Refugee Population - The refugee population in Fairfax County is predominantly Southeast Asian with Vietnamese being the largest subgroup.

    -- Labor Market - Low unemployment rate in project area: (3.2%)

    -- Refugee Service System - The project operator is an experienced provider of services to older workers. The county agency responsible for overseeing the project -- the Department of Manpower Services -- is also responsible for JTPA-funded services, as well as ORR-funded services.

PROJECT PROFILES

1. Project Location: Seattle, Washington

2. Organization Operating Project: Employment Opportunities Center (EOC)

3. Start Date - End Date: December 1984 - November 1985

4. Funding Level: Enhanced Skills Training Grant - $97,500

5. Target Population: Refugees over age 45, on cash assistance or with income below the poverty level.

6. Description of Service Strategy: Project uses both direct placement and two forms of short-term employer incentives (2-6 weeks of 50% OJT subsidy or 2-4 weeks of 100% "try-out employment" subsidy) to get jobs for clients.

7. Primary Services: Assessment, pre-employment training class, OJT, try-out employment, placement, follow-up.

8. Support Services: Bus tokens available for pre-employment training class.

9. Desired Outcomes:

   -- Number Served - 58
   -- Number Trained - 50
   -- Number Placed - 39

10. Notes on Context:

    -- Welfare System - AFDC-U exists but is difficult for most refugees to access because of strict work history requirements. Benefit levels are high.

    -- Refugee Population - The county area contains 64% of the state's refugees fitting the target category (refugees over 45). Southeast Asian refugees are the predominant group. Welfare utilization rates are high among refugees who have been in the U.S. less than 18 months.

    -- Labor Market - Diverse economy with jobs in manufacturing and service sectors; moderate unemployment

    -- Refugee Service System - The project operator also operates other employment programs for refugees. This project was indistinguishable in many respects from these other programs, except for the emphasis on older refugees.

PROJECT PROFILES

1. Project Location: Eau Claire, Wisconsin

2. Organization Operating Project: Wisconsin Job Service

3. Start Date - End Date: December 1984 - March 1986

4. Funding Level: Enhanced Skills Training Grant - $50,000

5. Target Population: Refugees on public assistance, who also have limited English, limited education, are older, or are handicapped.

6. Description of Service Strategy: Provision of direct placement services or classroom training to locate jobs for clients.

7. Primary Services: Assessment, classroom training (in cooking and baking, sewing, cleaning services, woodworking, and electronic assembly), job development.

8. Support Services: None

9. Desired Outcomes:

   -- Number Served - 56
   -- Number Trained - not stated
   -- Number Placed - 32

10. Notes on Context:

    -- Welfare System - Refugees are eligible for AFDC or AFDC-U. Benefit levels are high. Welfare is perceived as a major work disincentive.

    -- Refugee Population - The primary group of refugees in need of ongoing services are the Hmong, who have high welfare utilization rates, limited educational backgrounds and large families.

    -- Labor Market - Minimum wage jobs exist. Refugees are attracted to seasonal employment in the cucumber harvest.

    -- Refugee Service System - Job Service refers to MAAs for assistance with supportive services.

PROJECT PROFILES

1. Project Location: **Milwaukee, Wisconsin**

2. Organization Operating Project: Wisconsin Job Service

3. Start Date - End Date: December 1984 - September 1986

4. Funding Level: Enhanced Skills Training Grant - $100,000

5. Target Population: Unemployed refugees on public assistance, who meet at least one of the following criteria:

   - limited work experience in the United States;
   - a large family;
   - limited English skills;
   - limited formal education.

6. Description of Service Strategy: The project strategy was to use both classroom training and direct placement services to find employment for clients. Project clients were selected by reviewing the service plans of existing Job Service clients.

7. Primary Services: Training (power sewing and small parts assembly), placement.

8. Support Services: Supposed to be available from MAAs.

9. Desired Outcomes:

   -- Number Served - 87
   -- Number Trained - 25
   -- Number Placed - 63

10. Notes on Context:

    -- Welfare System - Refugees are eligible for AFDC or AFDC-U. Benefit levels are high. Welfare is perceived as a major work disincentive. The county also offers substantial General Assistance benefits.

    -- Refugee Population - The primary group of refugees in need of ongoing services are the Hmong, who have high welfare utilization rates, limited educational backgrounds and large families.

    -- Labor Market - High local unemployment rate: depressed manufacturing economy.

    -- Refugee Service System - Job Service refers refugees to MAAs for assistance with supportive services.

PROJECT PROFILES

1. Project Location: Tucson, Arizona

2. Organization Operating Project: Pima County Adult Education - Refugee Education Project

3. Start Date - End Date: January 1, 1985 - May 1, 1986

4. Funding Level: Multiple Wage Earner Grant - $79,774

5. Target Population: Refugees meeting one of the following criteria:

    - Over 45;
    - Homebound women with children;
    - Other secondary wage earners;
    - Welfare dependent or partially self-sufficient; or
    - Subsistence level wage earner.

6. Description of Service Strategy: The provision of a comprehensive package of support services (free daycare for 3 months, transportation to daycare, drivers education) and several modes of skills training to assist participants to obtain and/or upgrade employment.

7. Primary Services: Outreach, assessment, daycare, transportation to daycare, drivers education, 60 hours of classroom training in electronics assembly, up to 8 weeks of OJT subsidy to small employers, referral to Job Service or placement.

8. Support Services: See above

9. Desired Outcomes:

    -- Number Served - 80
    -- Number Trained - 40
    -- Number Placed - 60

10. Notes on Context:

    -- Welfare System - AFDC benefit levels are low. AFDC is not available to two-parent households. Medical assistance is available to eligible refugees without enrollment in cash assistance.

    -- Refugee Population - Refugee population includes Vietnamese, Laotians, and small numbers of Eastern Europeans, Iranians, and Angolans. Refugee welfare utilization rate is very low.

    -- Labor Market - Low unemployment rate: 5-6%. Refugees want jobs in electronics but unstable labor demand leads to periodic layoffs.

    -- Refugee Service System - Project is operated by an agency that is experienced in ESL and vocational training for refugees. Referrals are received from other refugee service providers as well. Mainstream training is not viewed as accessible to refugees.

PROJECT PROFILES

1. Project Location: Rockford, Illinois

2. Organization Operating Project: Rockford Consortium (Goodwill Industries, MAA, community college)

3. Start Date - End Date: November 1984 - March 1986

4. Funding Level: Multiple Wage Earner Grant - $118,873

5. Target Population: Refugees who:

   - Have one member of household already employed;
   - Are on cash assistance; or
   - Have been in the U.S. over 36 months.

6. Description of Service Strategy: Providing paid work experience and training in three areas (sorting nuts and bolts; "textiles" -- upholstery, sorting rags, and making rag rugs; and food service) by hiring refugees to work in Goodwill Industries' own sheltered operations.

7. Primary Services: Paid work experience in several different aspects of Goodwill's operations.

8. Support Services: Daycare while working at Goodwill. Lunch provided by food service trainees.

9. Desired Outcomes:

   -- Number Served - 56
   -- Number Trained - 56
   -- Number Placed - 27

10. Notes on Context:

    -- Welfare System - AFDC is available to two-parent households, but strict prior work history requirements make the program inaccessible to most refugees.

    -- Refugee Population - Rockford has a relatively small, stable refugee population. Most refugees in Rockford are Southeast Asian. The welfare utilization rate among local refugees is low.

    -- Labor Market - Recession affected manufacturing jobs. More jobs are available in service sector.

    -- Refugee Service System - This is Goodwill Industries' first attempt to offer training to refugees. Interesting (positive) interactions between refugees and other disabled clients. Local MAA participated in project.

PROJECT PROFILES

1. Project Location: St. Louis, Missouri

2. Organization Operating Project: Four agency consortium (International Institute, Catholic Charities, Jewish Employment and Vocational Services, The English Language School)

3. Start Date - End Date: December 1984 - November 1985

4. Funding Level: Multiple Wage Earner Grant - $150,000

5. Target Population:

   - Refugee women who have not previously worked for pay; or
   - Any other secondary wage earner on cash assistance or laid off or in danger of secondary migration.

6. Description of Service Strategy: Provision of self-paced classroom training in power sewing with VELT to enable trainees to obtain jobs in garment industry, plus provision of direct placement services for those who do not need training to obtain jobs.

7. Primary Services: Assessment, ESL, VELT, survival skills training, classroom skills training (usually about 4 weeks long), job development, placement.

8. Support Services: Daycare at one training site. Bus passes during training.

9. Desired Outcomes:

   -- Number Served - 150
   -- Number Trained - not stated
   -- Number Placed - 90

10. Notes on Context:

    -- Welfare System - AFDC is available to two-parent households, but prior work history requirements are stricly enforced. AFDC benefits are low. No GA for employables.

    -- Refugee Population - Extremely varied ethnicity of refugees since 1975: largest groups are Vietnamese, Laotians, Soviets, Cubans, other Eastern Europeans, Ethiopians, Afghans. Most refugees are placed in jobs within six months of arrival. Refugee welfare utilization rate is less than 25%.

    -- Labor Market - At time of proposal, St. Louis had second highest unemployment in U.S. (auto/defense industries down). Varied local economy is much stronger now. Large power sewing industry can absorb workers after short-term training.

    -- Refugee Service System - Project is operated by a consortium that includes all funded refugee service providers. Mainstream training usually has entrance requirements for English skills that exceed refugee levels.

PROJECT PROFILES

1. Project Location: Olympia, Washington

2. Organization Operating Project: The Refugee Forum

3. Start Date - End Date: January 1985 - December 1985

4. Funding Level: Multiple Wage Earner Grant - $57,000

5. Target Population:

   - Adult refugees in households with more than one potential wage earner;
   - Youth, aged 16-21; and
   - Older refugees (45-65).

6. Description of Service Strategy: The project arranged short-term (1 to 2 weeks) unpaid work experience positions for participants at several types of employers, and also developed classroom training in housekeeping. Direct placements and a casual labor exchange were also utilized.

7. Primary Services: Assessment, work orientation, unpaid on-the-job work experience, VELT, placement.

8. Support Services: Staff help arrange volunteer childcare.

9. Desired Outcomes:

   -- Number Served - 65
   -- Number Trained - 58
   -- Number Placed - 15

10. Notes on Context:

    -- Welfare System - Most refugees lose cash assistance eligibility at the end of 18 months after arrival; AFDC-U exists for two-parent households, but refugees find it difficult to meet strict prior work history requirements.

    -- Refugee Population - The refugee population is primarily Southeast Asian.

    -- Labor Market - No large manufacturing; government jobs tend to require more skills than refugees possess.

    -- Refugee Service System - Little contact with Job Service project serving refugees.

PROJECT PROFILES

1. Project Location: Spokane, Washington

2. Organization Operating Project: Lao Family Community

3. Start Date - End Date: February 1985 - December 1985

4. Funding Level: Multiple Wage Earner Grant - $23,600

5. Target Population:

   - Trainees referred by Washington Association of Churches home sewing project; and
   - Other secondary wage earners.

6. Description of Service Strategy: Provision of cultural orientation, assessment and direct job placement to find participants jobs in a variety of industries and occupations.

7. Primary Services: Cultural orientation, assessment, job placement.

8. Support Services: Referral to community services.

9. Desired Outcomes:

   -- Number Served - 35
   -- Number Trained - not stated
   -- Number Placed - 10

10. Notes on Context:

    -- Welfare System - Most refugees lose cash assistance eligibility at the end of 18 months after arrival; AFDC-U exists for two-parent households, but refugees find it difficult to meet strict prior work history requirements.

    -- Refugee Population - Varied refugee population is 85% Southeast Asian (Vietnamese, Hmong and Lao) and 10% Polish and Ethiopian.

    -- Labor Market - Diverse job opportunities in service and manufacturing.

    -- Refugee Service System - MAA had difficulty recruiting refugees from other ethnic groups; somewhat isolated.

PROJECT PROFILES

1. Project Location: Spokane, Washington

2. Organization Operating Project: Washington Association of Churches

3. Start Date - End Date: November 1984 - December 1985

4. Funding Level: Multiple Wage Earner Grant - $26,204

5. Target Population: Homebound women with limited English.

6. Description of Service Strategy: Provision of classroom sewing, training on home sewing machines, in combination with tutoring in English, to prepare participants for sewing jobs at home. Also direct placement in a variety of jobs.

7. Primary Services: Assessment, ESL tutoring, sewing class, direct placement.

8. Support Services: Referral to services in community.

9. Desired Outcomes:

   -- Number Served - 35 to 60
   -- Number Trained - not stated
   -- Number Placed - 5

10. Notes on Context:

    -- Welfare System - Most refugees lose cash assistance eligibility at the end of 18 months after arrival; AFDC-U exists for two-parent households, but refugees find it difficult to meet strict prior work history requirements.

    -- Refugee Population - Varied refugee population is 85% Southeast Asian (Vietnamese, Hmong and Lao) and 10% Polish and Ethiopian.

    -- Labor Market - Diverse job opportunities in service and manufacturing.

    -- Refugee Service System - Built on existing project to provide ESL to homebound women.

PROJECT PROFILES

1. Project Location: Vancouver, Washington

2. Organization Operating Project: The Southeast Asian Refugee Center

3. Start Date - End Date: January 1985 - December 1985

4. Funding Level: Multiple Wage Earner Grant - $42,775

5. Target Population:

   - Refugees on cash assistance or with income below poverty level;
   - Adult refugees in households with more than one potential wage earner;
   - Youth between 16 and 21; and
   - Refugees over 45.

6. Description of Service Strategy: The project developed a 4-week integrated classroom training/VELT curriculum to help participants get jobs in electronics. After the local electronics job market fell apart, part way through the project, jobs were developed in other industries.

7. Primary Services: Assessment, pre-employment and job search training, electronics classroom skills training, including VELT, job club, placement.

8. Support Services: Daycare during training, English tutoring if needed.

9. Desired Outcomes:

   -- Number Served - 60
   -- Number Trained - 40
   -- Number Placed - 19

10. Notes on Context:

    -- Welfare System - Most refugees lose cash assistance eligibility at the end of 18 months after arrival; AFDC-U exists for two-parent households, but refugees find it difficult to meet strict prior work history requirements.

    -- Refugee Population - Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees are the largest minority groups in this community.

    -- Labor Market - Varied manufacturing jobs, however refugees wanted electronic jobs which was unfortunate since this industry collapsed.

    -- Refugee Service System - Good coordination among JTPA, welfare, and refugee project.

PROJECT PROFILES

1. Project Location: Eau Claire, Wisconsin

2. Organization Operating Project: Western Dairylands Community Action Agency

3. Start Date - End Date: November 15, 1984 - November 15, 1985

4. Funding Level: Multiple Wage Earner Grant - $30,326

5. Target Population: Refugee youth and women in large families, especially those on public assistance.

6. Description of Service Strategy: Clients were assisted in locating employment, sometimes after short-term training. An 8-week cashiers' training class was developed, especially for refugee youth. A childcare certification class was offered for women.

7. Primary Services: Assessment, job readiness sessions, short-term training, direct placement.

8. Support Services: None available under project grant.

9. Desired Outcomes:

   -- Number Served - 75
   -- Number Trained - not stated
   -- Number Placed - 51

10. Notes on Context:

    -- Welfare System - Refugees are eligible for AFDC or AFDC-U (for two-parent unemployed households). Benefit levels are high.

    -- Refugee Population - The primary group of refugees in need of ongoing services are the Hmong who have high welfare utilization rates, limited educational histories, and large families. There has been substantial in-migration of Hmong households to Wisconsin. There is a strong work disincentive among refugees in Wisconsin that refugee services are striving to overcome.

    -- Labor Market - Minimum wage jobs exist. Refugees are attracted to seasonal employment in the cucumber harvest.

    -- Refugee Service System - The project operator operates other mainstream employment and training programs. Linkages to ORR-funded service providers are less strong.

PROJECT PROFILES

1. Project Location: Milwaukee, Wisconsin

2. Organization Operating Project: Hmong American Friendship Association

3. Start Date - End Date: January 1, 1985 - October 31, 1985

4. Funding Level: Multiple Wage Earner Grant - $37,000

5. Target Population: Husbands and wives in two-parent households. Youth in households with other wage-earners.

6. Description of Service Strategy: Referral to training programs, direct provision of 8-week ESL/job preparation curriculum, home daycare training, plus direct job placement/job search assistance, plus counseling to encourage women to enter the labor market.

7. Primary Services: Assessment, counseling, VESL, daycare training, direct placement assistance.

8. Support Services: Available from other funds. No daycare or transportation support as part of this project.

9. Desired Outcomes:

   -- Number Served - 80
   -- Number Trained - not stated
   -- Number Placed - 59

10. Notes on Context:

    -- Welfare System - Refugees are eligible for AFDC or AFDC-U. Benefit levels are high. Welfare is perceived as a major work disincentive. The county also offers substantial General Assistance benefits.

    -- Refugee Population - The primary group of refugees in need of ongoing services are the Hmong, who have high welfare utilization rates, limited educational backgrounds and large families.

    -- Labor Market - High local unemployment rates and depressed manufacturing economy.

    -- Refugee Service System - MAAs make referrals to Wisconsin Job Service for access to skills training; Job Service refers refugees to MAAs for assistance with supportive services.

PROJECT PROFILES

1. Project Location: Milwaukee, Wisconsin

2. Organization Operating Project: Lao Family Community

3. Start Date - End Date: January 1, 1985 - December 31, 1985

4. Funding Level: Multiple Wage Earner Grant - $33,000

5. Target Population: Refugee families with at least one person already working, but still on public assistance or Food Stamps.

6. Description of Service Strategy: Referral to training programs operated by Job Service, plus direct job placement.

7. Primary Services: Assessment, daycare training to permit daycare home licensing, referral to skills training, direct placement assistance.

8. Support Services: Available through other funding: translation, interpretation, health translating, home management training, emergency assistance.

9. Desired Outcomes:

   -- Number Served - 100
   -- Number Trained - not stated
   -- Number Placed - 55

10. Notes on Context:

    -- Welfare System - Refugees are eligible for AFDC or AFDC-U (for two-parent unemployed households). Benefit levels are high. The county also offers substantial General Assistance benefits.

    -- Refugee Population - The primary group of refugees in need of ongoing services are the Hmong who have high welfare utilization rates, limited educational histories, and large families. There has been substantial in-migration of Hmong households to Wisconsin. There is a strong work disincentive among refugees in Wisconsin that refugee services are striving to overcome.

    -- Labor Market - High local unemployment rate: depressed manufacturing economy.

    -- Refugee Service System - MAAs make referrals to Wisconsin Job Service for access to skills training; Job Service refers refugees to MAAs for assistance with supportive services.

PROJECT PROFILES

1. Project Location: Oshkosh, Wisconsin

2. Organization Operating Project: Lao/Hmong Association

3. Start Date - End Date: October 1984 to March 1986

4. Funding Level: Multiple Wage Earner Grant - $28,125

5. Target Population: Hmong women.

6. Description of Service Strategy: The project offered 5-week classroom (simulated) training in production line power sewing, plus training in beading and decorative lacing of boots and shoes, to assist participants in accessing job opportunities in these fields.

7. Primary Services: Classroom training, placement, ongoing supervision of at-home piecework contracts.

8. Support Services: Not available

9. Desired Outcomes:

   -- Number Served - 50
   -- Number Trained - 50
   -- Number Placed - not specified

10. Notes on Context:

    -- Welfare System - Refugees are eligible for AFDC or AFDC-U (for two-parent unemployed households). Benefit levels are high.

    -- Refugee Population - The primary group of refugees in need of ongoing services are the Hmong who have high welfare utilization rates, limited educational histories, and large families. There has been substantial in-migration of Hmong households to Wisconsin. There is a strong work disincentive among refugees in Wisconsin that refugee services are striving to overcome.

    -- Labor Market - Entry-level job opportunities include power sewing and home piece work.

    -- Refugee Service System - The MAA has other refugee service funding. This project operates quite independently of the mainstream training system.

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PROJECT PROFILES

1. Project Location: Wausau, Wisconsin

2. Organization Operating Project: Wausau Area Hmong Mutual Association

3. Start Date - End Date: March 1985 - March 1986

4. Funding Level: Multiple Wage Earner Grant - $20,572

5. Target Population: Refugee women and youth in large families, especially those on public assistance.

6. Description of Service Strategy: Assisting participants to obtain part-time or full-time employment, or undertake craft production for sale, to enhance household income.

7. Primary Services: Assessment, child care certification class, crafts marketing class, job development, counseling.

8. Support Services: Not available

9. Desired Outcomes:

   -- Number Served - 45
   -- Number Trained - not stated
   -- Number Placed - 30

10. Notes on Context:

    -- Welfare System - Refugees are eligible for AFDC or AFDC-U (for two-parent unemployed households). Benefit levels are high.

    -- Refugee Population - The primary group of refugees in need of ongoing services are the Hmong who have high welfare utilization rates, limited educational histories, and large families. There has been substantial in-migration of Hmong households to Wisconsin. There is a strong work disincentive among refugees in Wisconsin that refugee services are striving to overcome.

    -- Labor Market - Industry is in decline. Limited jobs except for opportunities in seasonal ginseng industry.

    -- Refugee Service System - The MAA has some additional ORR-funded support, but is not yet a seasoned service provider.